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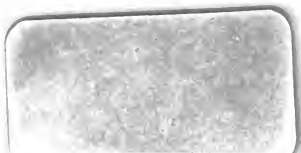
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141. n 270⁶



SELECT TRANSLATIONS

FOR

SPIRITUAL READING.

IV.



LETTERS AND WRITINGS

OF

MARIE LATASTE.

VOL. II.

•

LETTERS AND WRITINGS

OF

M A R I E L A T A S T E

*LAY-SISTER OF THE CONGREGATION
OF THE SACRED HEART.*

WITH

CRITICAL AND EXPOSITORY NOTES BY TWO FATHERS
OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

Translated from the French

BY

EDWARD HEALY THOMPSON, M.A.

“Declaratio sermonum tuorum illuminat, et dat intellectum parvulis.”
• — *Psalm cxviii.* 130.

VOL. II.

LONDON: BURNS & OATES, LTD.

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO: BENZIGER BROTHERS



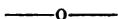
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THE first volume of this work was published nearly twelve years ago. The second, translated and prepared for the press by my husband, was ready to follow at no long interval, but he was induced to postpone its publication in order to give precedence to some other works which he had undertaken, still intending to bring it out later. This he was not able to accomplish. I desire now to carry out his wish, not only because it would pain me much if anything to which my dear husband devoted much patient care and labour were to be wasted, but also because I should be very sorry, as he also would have been, that an edifying work, such as this is esteemed to be, should be left incomplete. If life is spared to me, it is my purpose to publish next year, should it be possible, the third volume, Letters Biographical, which is also in MS. prepared for the press. This will complete the Writings and Letters of Marie Lataste.

HARRIET D. M. HEALY THOMPSON.

Easter, 1893.

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BOOK VIII.

GRACE AND THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES.

Glory and praise, love and thanksgiving be unceasingly rendered to Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

1. *Of grace ; different significations of the term ; graces natural and supernatural ; of the author of grace.*

I WAS praying one day on my knees before the Holy Tabernacle. I was thanking the Saviour Jesus for the numerous graces He had granted me and never ceased still to grant me. He appeared to me on the altar ; and I do not know why, but I did not venture to approach Him, but remained in my place. He called to me, and I drew near and fell at His feet. "My daughter," He said to me, "I have hearkened to your words and your thanksgivings. I have granted you numerous graces ; your gratitude for My benefits will obtain for you others still more considerable, and the first which I desire to give you is that you should well understand what grace is, and the effects it produces in souls.

"Do you know, My daughter, what are the different significations of this term, grace?" "Lord, I cannot tell whether I know them, but at least I am unable to

find words or to express my ideas respecting this term."

"Well, My daughter, I am going to teach you.

"The term grace signifies pardon. Have you not heard it said that a king, or judge, or some man in power, has extended grace to a culprit?" "Yes, Lord." "What does that mean?" "That the king, the judge, or the man in power, has pardoned that culprit."

"The term grace signifies affection, love, benevolence. You doubtless recollect those words of the angel to Mary: 'Thou hast found grace with God'?" * "Yes, Lord." "This means that God grants to Mary all His complacency, and that she has gained His love.

"The term grace signifies thanksgiving; † as when you say: 'I render Thee grace, O Lord, for all Thy benefits.'

"The term grace, considered in a deeper sense, signifies every gift of God accorded to men by His sole liberality and without any merit on their part. Thus regarded, you may distinguish two kinds of it: the grace of the natural order, which is concerned with all the needs of the temporal life; and the grace of the supernatural order, which is concerned with all the needs of your soul, in order to conduct it to eternal happiness.

"Thus your creation, the preservation of your life, the strength, the health, the activity of your body, the intelligence and the faculties of your soul, are natural graces, gifts of God. These are gratuities, gifts, for they were not due to you. How could your birth have been a matter of right to you? You had no

* St. Luke i. 30.

† We have retained this meaning of the term in speaking of "grace" before and after meals.

existence : has nothingness rights ? How could intelligence have been a matter of right to you ? Is not God free in respect to His gifts ? Could He not then deny you intelligence ? Could He not also deny you the use of it ?

“Grace in the supernatural order is a supernatural and invisible gift, but one of which the soul has experience, and which God bestows gratuitously on intelligent and reasonable beings as a power and a force to bring them to life eternal. It is a gift, like every thing which is in you ; it is supernatural, that is to say, superior to natural gifts, its end being to vivify and transform you. It is a gratuitous gift, which God might not have bestowed and which creatures could not claim. It is granted to intelligent and reasonable beings, because only they who have intelligence and reason can merit or demerit, use or neglect, this gift, and thus attain or lose eternal life. It is to this end that grace is given you, to enable you to obtain the glory of Heaven.

“From what I have just said regarding grace you ought to conclude that God is the author and giver of it ; that is to say, He is the principle, and the end He proposes to Himself in giving it is to make faithful souls partakers of the glory of Heaven.

“Do you think, My daughter, that since the fall of the first man there has been any cause which has merited the gift of grace to men, and which does not prevent grace being a gratuitous gift ?” “Lord, it seems to me,” I answered, “that Thou art the meritorious cause of grace. Thy Incarnation, Thy Life, Thy sufferings in Thy Passion, Thy Death, have merited for us all the graces of salvation. Yet, notwithstanding Thy death and Thy merits, grace is

a gratuitous gift, because Thou art God, and because Thy Incarnation, the meritorious cause of grace, was free."

"Yes, My daughter, it is I who have merited for men all the graces which God grants them, and I merited them by suffering voluntarily, and without being obliged thereto, the torments of My Passion.

"My daughter, there are two kinds of grace which God bestows on men : the first for themselves and for their needs ; the second for the wants and necessities of others. These latter are not in themselves a direct cause of merit ; but the former always render a soul pleasing to God when they are received with good dispositions and a holy use is made of them.

"I will speak to you later of the graces which God grants to certain souls, not for themselves, but for others. To-day I will speak to you only of the graces which God bestows upon each for his own personal profit."

2. *Of actual grace ; its necessity for doing good and avoiding evil.*

I do not know whether I express myself correctly, but I cannot express myself differently. I write according to the intelligence which has been given me of the words of the Saviour Jesus.

I now continue : "Among the graces which God grants to each for his own personal profit, there are two distinct kinds : those which He grants for the sanctification and goodness of all acts, and those which constitute a state, a manner of being, in the soul ; or, in other words, actual graces and habitual or sanctifying graces.

“What is actual grace ? Before replying to this, I must remind you, My daughter, that man by himself can do nothing meritorious of Heaven without the grace of God. You will now easily understand what actual grace is. Actual grace is a transient succour which God gives to man that he may know, will, or perform what is supernaturally good, by exciting and aiding him to know it, will it, or do it.

“It is a succour which is necessary to man, because sin has made him full of weakness, and he is powerless to attain a supernatural end. It is a transient succour. This distinguishes it from habitual grace, which resides in the soul in a permanent manner.

“I have added, My daughter, that this succour excites and aids man, to show you that this succour disposes him to action and upholds him when he performs it. For what action is this succour given to man ? For an action either interior or exterior. Now, for every action there are two things : the disposition to perform it and the performance of it. As regards the disposition to act, it is the understanding of man which is specially at work ; and this succour of God enlightens his understanding. As regards the performance of the action, it is the will ; and this succour of God excites and assists the will to perform it. Whether the action be interior, as an act of love, or exterior, as an exercise of piety, in order that this action may be good the succour of God is necessarily required, and this is called actual grace.

“Actual grace is given for two ends : first, for the practice of good, as I have just pointed out to you, and next for the avoidance of evil ; whence it follows, My daughter, that if this grace is necessary, it is so for doing good and also for avoiding evil.

“Actual grace is necessary for doing good, for producing supernatural acts of faith, hope, and charity; because faith, hope, and charity are supernatural virtues, and man, by the sole force of his nature, cannot produce such acts. Even he who possesses sanctifying grace has need of actual grace for producing these acts, for this sanctifying grace, like all supernatural habits which God establishes in the soul in a permanent manner, is pretty much in regard to supernatural acts, what the natural powers and faculties are in regard to simply natural acts.

“It must not on that account be said, My daughter, that the acts of men which are not preceded and aided by grace are bad acts, or that man without grace can do nothing that is good; but the truth is, that without grace he can do nothing meritorious of Heaven.

“Actual grace is necessary for doing good and also for avoiding evil. Yes, My daughter, it is necessary even to the man who is in the state of grace, and without this actual grace it is impossible for him to pass a long time without falling into venial sin. It is necessary, not only for avoiding venial sin, but also mortal sin. In fact, to avoid evil he must resolve on what is good, and perform it; for he who does not advance goes back, and he who is not continually accumulating scatters. Now, for a man to resolve on what is good, and to do it, there is needed, besides the predisposition given by habitual grace, an existing and an actual succour for performing it.

“My daughter, actual grace will never be wanting to you; receive it and make use of it according to

the design of God. Thus you will avoid evil and will practise good.

“I will not detain you longer ; to-morrow, return to Me, and I will speak to you of sanctifying grace. I will tell you what are its causes, its nature, and the effects it produces in the soul.”

3. *Of sanctifying grace ; different causes of sanctifying grace ; its intimate nature and effects ; it does not do away with concupiscence.*

On the morrow the Saviour Jesus spoke to me as follows : “My daughter, actual grace is the first means which disposes the soul for the possession of God, the beatific vision, and the glory of Heaven ; but it does not put it in immediate relation with its supernatural end. It is not, then, the final means which conducts to the vision of God or to its attainment, but it leads the soul to the acquisition of habitual or sanctifying grace, which is in very truth the immediate preparation for the possession of God, because it plants within it the participation of the Divine life.

“There are several causes of the sanctifying grace which God bestows upon you :—

“The productive or creative cause of grace ; which is God Himself, the author of every gift, whether natural or supernatural.

“The meritorious cause of this grace ; which is none other but the Son of Man and the sufferings of His Passion.

“The instrumental cause, or that by which God gives you grace, is the sacraments.

“The formal cause of grace, or the nature of grace

as imparted to the soul, is the justice of God communicated to that soul.

“And, lastly, My daughter, the final cause of grace, or the motives for which God communicates it, are three in number: the first motive is His own glory. God, as I have already told you, has made everything for His own glory; but nothing can contribute more to His glory than the gift of habitual grace, whereby He raises the soul to Himself, which will be to Him as an everlasting praise to be rendered to Him for endless ages.

“The second motive is the glory of His Son made Man for the salvation of mankind. What is glory? It is the irradiation of a being; it is the manifestation of the attributes which are in him. Now, man by grace becomes a member of My body, and, being united to Me, he is just, he is holy, he is the friend of God, he is the son of God; and this sonship, this friendship, this holiness, this justice shine in him in all their splendour, and manifest Me, who am one with him. The third motive is the participation of man in the glory of God and in My glory, which is attained definitively for ever only when man is definitively and for ever a partaker of the glory of My Father and of My glory.

“What, then, is the nature of sanctifying grace? or what is sanctifying grace? Sanctifying grace is a supernatural gift of God, gratuitous and created, intrinsically inherent in the soul, and abiding in it in the form of a habit; by which man, partaking of the Divine life, justified, sanctified, and pleasing to God, becomes His adopted son and acquires a title to eternal life.

“Do you understand, these words, My daughter?”

“Lord, I understand some of them, but others are full of obscurity to me.” “Do you wish to hear an explanation of them?” “Yes, Lord, and I shall receive it with avidity.”

“You understand, My daughter, that sanctifying grace is a supernatural and gratuitous gift?” “Yes, Lord, you have already told me so.” “Well, My daughter, sanctifying grace is also a created gift, that is to say, how great soever its perfection may be, this gift is not the very substance of God, for this gift is intrinsically inherent in the soul; that is to say, it comes to modify the soul but not to destroy it, or to change it so that it ceases to be a soul. It is inherent and in the form of a habit, that is, of an inclination, a propensity, to do good. Now, if this gift was the very substance of God, there would be not only an inclination to do good, there would be the continual action of good, because God is sovereignly and eternally the author of good.

“Sanctifying grace is a participation in the Divine Nature. My daughter, you cannot understand either the import or the nature of this word; you will understand it in Heaven, and this will be your happiness in your true country.

“Nevertheless, I will give you an explanation, or by means of an image, I will convey to you an idea of what this participation is.

“I told you, when speaking to you of God, that in God there are Three Persons; that the Father knows Himself, and by this knowledge generates His Son; that the Father and the Son love each other, and that this love of the Father and the Son is the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. This eternal knowledge of the Father, this eternal tendency of the

Son towards the Father, this eternal love of the Father for the Son, and of the Son for the Father, through the Holy Ghost, constitute the interior life of the Holy Trinity. My daughter, something similar takes place in man, who is made to the image of God, much more by the second creation, which is operated by grace, than by the first, which is the work of nature. Grace imparts to man faith, hope, and charity, and these three virtues constitute the interior life of the soul, a life of activity and movement, since man knows God by faith, tends towards Him by hope, and unites himself to Him by charity. Now, is not to live thus to live according to the image of the life of God ?

“I have told you, My daughter, that God is holy, that God is just, that God is almighty, and that by His exterior works He manifests His attributes. Now, My daughter, such is man when possessed of sanctifying grace. He is holy, for sanctifying grace is incompatible with mortal sin. He is just, because he discerns good from evil, avoids evil, and does good. He is almighty, and his good works make manifest his strength and power. He fights against the world, against the devil, against himself ; he fights against evil, he combats only for good, he is all-powerful to perform it.

“What marvels, then, does not sanctifying grace effect ! This is not all ; it also renders the soul pleasing to God. For God loves Himself and loves His life. He sees Himself reproduced in him who has sanctifying grace ; He discerns His own life in him, He beholds His justice, His sanctity : how, then, should He not love him who has sanctifying grace ?

“Yes, My daughter, He loves him as He loves His own Son ; for the man who has sanctifying grace

becomes by that alone His adopted son. He sees in him My merits, My Passion, and My death, and He says : ' He is My son.' He sees in him My whole life, and He says : ' He is My son.'

" Now, this adoption of man to be a son of God, which is produced by grace, entails immediately another result which is inseparable from adoption ; and that is the real, veritable right of him who has sanctifying grace, and is adopted, to the glory and the bliss of Him who adopts him.

" Here, My daughter, is, in a few words, an explanation of the definition I first gave you, and such is the nature of grace.

" What conclusion would you draw from what I have been saying to you on the subject of sanctifying grace?" " I do not know, Lord; but speak to Thy servant Marie, and light will come into her mind." " My daughter, have I not told you that sanctifying grace renders man just, holy, the friend of God?" " Yes, Lord." " Is man, My daughter, born in this state of justice, holiness, and friendship with God?" " No, Lord." " In what state is man born?" " He is born in sin." " How does he get out of this state?" " By baptism." " What does baptism impart to him who is baptised over and above the Christian character?" " Sanctifying grace." " And what does sanctifying grace effect in the person baptised?" " It justifies him, it makes him holy." " Can justification exist without sanctifying grace?" " I do not think so." " Can sanctification exist in a soul without its being sanctified?" " No, Lord." " Does a soul receive justification at the same moment as it receives sanctifying grace?" " Yes, Lord." " How do you understand this?" " Lord, I figure the sinner to myself as a poor man destitute of

everything, and God as a king infinitely rich. This king comes to the poor man with all His treasures and puts him in possession of them ; henceforth this poor man ceases to be poor and becomes rich from the moment he has received the king's gifts. And so it is with the sinner : he has sin in his heart, God gives him grace, and sin departs. Sin seems to me to be incompatible with sanctifying grace, as poverty is with riches." "You are right, My daughter ; man cannot be at the same time a sinner and a friend of God ; if he is a sinner he abides in death, because sin is the death of the soul ; henceforth he is separated from God ; but if he has grace he has life ; if he has grace he is the friend of God ; and if God loves him he must necessarily be justified. God hates sin, but He loves justice ; consequently, he who is the object of God's friendship by sanctifying grace is necessarily justified.

"Sanctifying grace imparted to the soul produces in it something besides justification. It also completely renews the interior of man ; it renews his youth, it brings him near to God, his principle, it separates him from creatures. Now, if God draws near to man or man to God, there must necessarily be a change either in God or in man. In God, My daughter, there can be no change ; it is man, therefore, who changes and who is changed. He becomes a new man, a man without sin, a man united to God, a man with an inclination leading him to good.

"Nevertheless, sanctifying grace does not remove concupiscence from the soul. What is concupiscence, My daughter ? It is nothing else but the disordered inclination of the soul moving it to cleave to the creature and making it forget God. Original sin has given the soul the love of created good. In itself,

this love is not an evil, it is not sin, but it may easily become so ; and it really is so from the moment that the love of infinite good is not superior to the love of finite good, from the moment that the love of the Creator is not superior to that of the creature.

“This ought to be sufficient to make you understand that concupiscence is not removed by sanctifying grace, because the love of created good, of that which is finite and earthly, not being sin, and not being incompatible with sanctifying grace, it cannot remove it.

“Sanctifying grace, however, fights against concupiscence ; it is a weapon against concupiscence ; it is a tendency opposed to that of concupiscence, for it imparts to the soul a predominant love of infinite good, far surpassing that of material and earthly goods.

“This is the work of grace in the soul.”

4. *The grace of God is for all, but it is not bestowed on all in an equal degree ; distribution of grace.*

I was praying one day before the Holy Tabernacle. I had united myself to the Saviour Jesus by spiritual communion, when He came to me and said :—

“I have spoken to you, My daughter, of grace and of different kinds of grace ; I wish you also to know that grace is given to all, and that the obligations of each state do not impede its flow. Grace is a vast inexhaustible spring which gushes from My heart, and at which all may draw abundantly. Whatever may be the position and the state of men, all may have part therein, by offering to Me their actions, by sanctifying them, by doing them in view of pleasing My Father, and, above all, by the practice of religion and the frequentation of the sacraments.

“Yet look at men, My daughter, they fly from My grace, they have no eyes but for their material interests; they live in sin, they live in death. What ignorance of the truths of salvation is theirs! and is it not their own fault? How will they excuse their indifference? How will they explain their estrangement from God? Their ignorance is really a culpable ignorance, or an affected ignorance. These men often remember well the instructions received at their first communion, but they are attached to their sins and are unwilling to forsake them; they are attached to their dishonest gains and are unwilling to give them up; they are attached to their passions, and, being unwilling to overcome them, they profess themselves ignorant. Poor people, what madness!

“If they are really ignorant, why do they not listen to the instruction of My ministers? Why do they not conform their conduct to the teachings which are given them by My priests? Do they not know that they have done evil, that they have committed sin, that they have rebelled against God, and are deprived of My grace?

“My daughter, it is not high station or the various conditions of men which impede the flow of My grace; all may have part therein, and abundantly. My greatest desire would be to shower it down in profusion on all souls. Those who wish to have part therein can do so, even the most ignorant, because they find in My priests friends who sustain them, who guide and enlighten them, who restore to them peace of heart and of soul, who free them from their faults, and give them My grace. O men! do they not know that God regards less what they know or what they do than the good-will with which they

act? Do they not feel in themselves the daily motions of grace inviting them to return to God, to give themselves to Him? God wills the salvation of all as I have already told you, and He gives to all the graces which they need for working out their salvation.

“Nevertheless, My daughter, there is a certain measure of grace which God, in His eternal and inscrutable decrees, destines for each. He does not grant to all the same degree. But neither will He demand from all the same account. He proportions grace to the degree of sanctity which He desires should be attained by him to whom He gives it; He also proportions His grace to the needs of each.

“There are general graces in which all participate, the just and sinners alike, and all men in their different conditions. But there are particular graces which God does not grant to all Christians, because they are not necessary except to certain chosen souls and certain vocations. How much higher graces, for example, are needed by a priest in order to his living a holy life and sanctifying others; or by a confessor or a director in order to his leading or conducting souls in the path of truth and goodness! These graces are not necessary for you, My daughter; neither will you have to render an account of them.

“Grace is to all a source of life and the remedy for all evils. It restores life to those who are dead in sin. It gives fervour to those who are lax and negligent, compunction to the hardened, recollection to the thoughtless, submission to the rebellious, charity to those who are cold and heartless.

“Ever ponder deeply what grace is, My daughter; esteem it ever more and more; let it increase in your

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heart. Do not forget that God grants it to all, but more particularly and in greatest abundance to those who beg it of Him and correspond therewith."

5. *What to do on the receipt of extraordinary favours.*

I was much disquieted about all that had been for some time passing within me. The doubts which my director evinced as to the truth of what I was seeing and hearing augmented my fear of being the victim of some delusion. I have said elsewhere* how the Saviour Jesus Himself disabused and reassured me.

Here is what He said to me as the course to be pursued in the case of extraordinary favours accorded by God, such as revelations, visions, ecstasies, raptures :

"My daughter, ought persons who experience attractions of this kind, which carry them out of themselves and rejoice their heart and soul, to give themselves up to them and follow them? But what happens to a poor soul if it be the devil who transforms himself into an angel of light in order to seduce him? Ought it pertinaciously to resist? But if this attraction be a grace of God, it will not have corresponded to it. What then ought the soul to do in such a conjuncture?

"The first thing for a person to do, My daughter, is to manifest to his director all he experiences and all that passes in his soul; then he ought to follow his director's counsel in everything. The director, if he is wise, if he is prudent and learned, will examine everything which this soul reports to him; he will see if these things are conformable to the spirit of piety

* See Letter X.

and to that of the Church. He will examine the dispositions of the person he directs, and if he judges that what is passing within him inclines him to vanity and independence, or produces in him some hurtful result, he will counsel him to resist these attractions and reject them.

“If he sees, on the contrary, that everything he says is conformable to the spirit of piety and of the Church, and that, instead of losing piety, he becomes more and more pious, simple, humble, obedient, and faithful in fulfilling his duties, he will engage him to submit humbly to the will of God and abandon himself to Him like a child into the arms of its mother.

“When a director has counselled a person thus to receive this attraction and to correspond with it, what ought this person to do in order fittingly to correspond? As soon as he feels his soul attracted towards another state than that which is its habitual or normal state, he ought to begin by denuding himself completely of his own will, in order to embrace without reserve that of his director, and then beseech God not to suffer him to be deceived. In fine, he ought to acknowledge himself to be unworthy of any of these signal favours, and to pray the Lord to show him mercy.

“If he acts thus, it is certain, My daughter, that God will not permit him to be the victim of any delusion, because he has put all his confidence in Him. Nay more, if this favour is a favour granted by God, so far from being withdrawn, it will be given to him in greater abundance and perfection, because he will merit it still more by his humble and submissive way of acting.

“This person may then not only abandon himself

to those transports which he experiences, but also listen to and retain the instructions which are given him, provided they are conformable in all things to the teachings of the Holy Church of God. As he cannot judge of them himself, he ought also to communicate to his director what has been said to him, and in the form it was said to him, so far as he is able to remember. His director will judge of these instructions with prudence and discretion, and will even consult, if it be necessary, those who are ministers of God like himself but better qualified. This done, the director will give his decision. If he whom he directs receives his decisions with humility and submission, it will be a proof that the Spirit of God is with him. If, on the contrary, he receives them with repugnance, if he shakes off the yoke of dependence to follow his own will, this will be an indubitable sign that the Spirit of God is not in him.

“My daughter, in such cases those souls have need of two things : great humility and great submission to their director. Moreover, in order that this submission may be not only good in itself but productive of good results, the director of such souls ought to be well qualified, wise, and prudent ; otherwise, it will be one blind man leading another blind man, and they will both fall down the precipice.”

6. *Of graces purely gratuitous.*

The Saviour Jesus said to me on another occasion : “My daughter, I have spoken to you of the graces which God grants to men for themselves and for their own spiritual advancement. There are other graces

granted by God to certain souls which are more for the profit of others than for their own benefit; as, for example, those of the Apostles, who worked miracles, raised the dead, made the lame to walk, confounded impostors, made themselves understood by many different nations of various languages, and predicted future events long before.

“These gifts of miracles, of languages, of prophecy, and others like them, were given to the Apostles, and are still given to certain chosen souls for the good of their brethren. It is by miracles that they convince the unbelieving; it is by languages that they instruct them; it is by foretelling future events that they maintain in the hearts of the faithful sentiments of hope, or excite in them emotions of fear.

“Men, however, should not desire these gifts, My daughter, for God grants them only to souls chosen for the purpose. But when God grants these extraordinary and purely gratuitous graces, they must be employed conformably to His will, in order to work for others and in others the good which God desires to see effected.

“These instructions respecting grace and its effects will be sufficient for you, My daughter, and will enable you to show yourself more faithful to all the graces of God, the graces of every day, of every hour, of every moment, which descend upon your soul like a refreshing dew to make all sorts of virtues germinate within you.”

I thanked the Saviour Jesus, and, throwing myself at His feet, I besought His benediction. The Saviour raised His eyes to heaven, and said: “Help, O My Father, Thy servant Marie, as I bless her, and let Thy word produce in her soul the fruits of life.”

7. *Of the theological virtues ; of faith ; divers significations of faith ; the nature of faith ; the qualities of faith ; two kinds of acts of faith, exterior and interior ; three acts of faith, exterior and interior ; without faith it is impossible to please God ; of the object of faith ; of the causes of faith ; of the advantages of faith, or its excellence.*

Glory and praise, love and thanksgiving, be rendered unceasingly to Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

“Sanctifying grace imparts to the soul the three virtues of faith, hope, and charity, to direct it towards God ; those of justice, fortitude, prudence, and temperance, to direct it in its relations with creatures ; and, finally, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost to dispose it to receive the movements which He communicates to those who desire to be saved.”

He spoke to me that day only of faith, hope, and charity.

“Faith,” He said to me, “may be understood in several ways, as may also hope, charity, and grace.

“Faith signifies the interior judgment of the soul, indicating good and evil : as it is said of a man, He did this in good faith or in bad faith.

“Faith signifies fidelity in keeping an engagement or a promise.

“Faith signifies the confidence which every one reposes in the word of another.

“Faith signifies that inclination by which a man gives his assent, without fear of being deceived, to what, nevertheless, he does not clearly see.

“Faith signifies one of the gratuitous gifts of God,

by which a man has a supereminent certainty of things which he ought to believe.

“Faith signifies the character which distinguishes Christians from those who are not so; that is the character imprinted by baptism.

“Faith signifies the matter or collection of truths which is necessary to be believed; or the Creeds.

“Faith signifies an informal and lifeless habit, which is not sufficient for salvation; faith without works.

“Such are the different senses in which faith may be understood; but the faith of which I desire to speak to you, and which you must not confound with these kinds of faith, is theological faith, the supernatural virtue of faith.

“In the virtue of faith you must distinguish four things: its nature, its act, its object, its cause and its effect.

“The virtue of faith, My daughter, is a supernatural habit which God imparts to the soul, and which gives it a firm conviction and a free assent to the truths which He has revealed and the Catholic Church proposes to its belief.

“Faith is a supernatural virtue, and consequently a gift of God. It gives a firm conviction; that is to say, it removes all fear of error in regard to what is believed. This conviction produces the assent of the will, an assent which is free and not forced, as is that of the devils, who also believe, but of necessity. Faith has to do with the truths which God has revealed and which the Catholic Church proposes to be believed. He instituted the Church to this end. He who has the virtue of faith believes these truths without trouble or difficulty; he is moved to believe them to be truths

because the virtue of faith is a habit, an inclination, a propension, which the soul receives from God by this virtue, and which leads it to believe what He reveals. He who has the virtue of faith is convinced of these truths, although he does not comprehend them. These truths are not a mere opinion but a divine reality; and conviction is so much the more firm as it rests upon God, Eternal Truth, who cannot deceive. He who has faith has in him the beginning of eternal life; that is to say, he possesses by believing that which he does not see, but which he hopes for, which he desires, and towards which he tends by that movement of his intelligence and that assent of his will.

“Faith is the first of the virtues and the foundation of all other virtues. It is before hope, because in order to hope it is necessary to know that which forms the object of that hope. It is before charity, because charity is love, and in order to love it is necessary also to know the object of that love. Now, faith causes the soul to know God and that which has relation to God. It is on faith, therefore, that hope and charity rest.

“Faith can exist alone without charity and hope. But hope cannot exist without faith. Charity also requires faith for its existence, at least here below. I say ‘at least here below,’ because faith and hope are virtues that belong only to time; they will not exist in eternity, because there will no longer be any reason for their existence. In heaven God is seen face to face, and consequently faith is needless; in heaven God is possessed, and consequently He is no longer the object of hope.

“Faith is the first of the virtues in the order of existence, but not in that of dignity. Charity is the greatest of the virtues; it is their life.

“Faith must be one, Catholic and true. As a virtue, it is one ; there are not many virtues in faith, although it is given to many. It is one in its object ; all must believe the same thing : God and the revelations of God. It is one in its end ; it directs only to the possession of God.

“It must be Catholic and universal ; that is to say, it must extend to all truths without exception, pervade all regions of the earth, and embrace the Universal Good of time and eternity, God.

“It must be true. If faith were erroneous, it would no longer be faith ; it would be error, falsehood, deceit ; faith must necessarily regard truth, that is to say, God.

“The virtue of faith resides in the intelligence and in the will. In the intelligence, as in the special place of its abode, whence it explores and surveys ; in the will, as the force of that survey and the assent to the existence of what it has seen.

“There are two kinds of acts of faith, My daughter : the first is purely interior ; the second is exterior, and manifests itself externally.

“The interior act of faith is of three kinds. It may regard God in a general way, as He is in Himself, Trinity and Unity, without seeking to penetrate the mystery, the soul saying simply, ‘I believe.’

“The act of faith may regard God as Infallible and Eternal Truth. This act may express itself thus : I believe in the word of God and His revelation.

“In fine, the act of faith may be an act of the intelligence which the will determines to tend towards God. This act may express itself thus : I believe in God, Supreme Truth and Goodness.

“The exterior act of faith is also threefold. The

exterior act of faith is nothing else but the exterior manifestation of that which is in the soul which believes, and this manifestation takes place in three ways.

“The first act of faith is the public acknowledgment of all the articles of faith. This acknowledgment is not necessary to salvation, but it may become so according to place or time. If you were cited before the tribunal of some prince, or judge, or magistrate, and were interrogated respecting your faith, you would be bound to manifest it, and that so strictly that if you were to die after having denied or dissembled it, without retracting, you would certainly be damned.

“This confession of his faith, My daughter, is, you will understand, one of the most glorious acts of a Christian. To confess his faith is, in fact, to honour and glorify God ; to confess his faith is to be its defender ; to confess his faith is to confound the unbelieving ; to confess his faith is to edify his neighbour, and to give him a good example.

“The second exterior act of faith is that of adoration of God by exterior worship rendered to Him in acknowledgment of His divine attributes.

“The third exterior act of faith is the confession of sins, by which a man acknowledges having offended God, and begs Him to forgive and forget his offences.

“Faith is necessary to salvation, My daughter. Salvation, in fact, is but the consummation and perfection of a reasonable being. Now, the perfection of such a being does not consist only in the possession of everything which constitutes its nature, but also in the reception of the movement which is communicated to this nature by a superior nature.

You recollect what I said to you* of the two movements of man: the movement towards existence and the movement of return towards God? The movement towards existence is the gift of everything which appertains to human nature; the movement of return towards God is the movement which the Divine Nature, being superior to human nature, gives to it in order to direct it towards good. With this movement the soul goes straight to good, straight to God, straight to eternal happiness. Now, the first condition for the reception of this movement is faith, which causes the soul to know God, which makes it tend towards Him by appreciating that which is in Him and which He desires to communicate to it. He who has not faith is like a house whose doors are shut, into which God would wish to enter, but does not because the master does not open to Him. If He entered He would convey light into it; but because He is not admitted that house remains in darkness and obscurity. Without faith, then, it is impossible to please God, because not to have faith is to reject God. Without faith no man can be saved, because he is not united to God. Without faith he falls under the condemnation of God, because he will allow himself to follow all his inclinations, because he will commit sin, and sin calls for condemnation.

“My daughter, what ought you to believe? The truth: eternal truth, the truth which ever abides and will abide through all eternity. Truth is God; truth is I Myself. I am the Personal Expression of truth, and rightly have I said to men,† as I now say to you,

* Book I., Section 5.

† St. John xiv. 6.

I am the Truth. I am the primary truth which contains all other truths, the truth which encloses all, and all truths united in Me are but one only truth : the Truth of God, or God Himself, the Eternal Truth.

“Now, you are bound to believe primary truth. You are bound to believe also the other truths which flow from Me and by which you are aided to tend toward Me. The manifestation of primary truth to a soul draws that soul towards the truth. To draw it more easily, this truth manifests itself under diverse forms, which, like so many bonds, gently entwine themselves about the soul, and draw it towards God.

“Thus, all that has relation to the Divinity, that is to say, God in Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all that has relation to My Humanity, My Church, the Sacraments which I have instituted, are so many different forms of primary truth which present themselves to man and say to him, Believe and proceed towards God.

“All these truths are contained in the Creed of the Church and in the decisions which the Church pronounces concerning primary truth ; decisions which are inspired by God Himself.

“These truths are not comprehended by man in their intimate nature, because Truth is God, but he believes them, and ought to believe them, because they come from God.

“Faith, My daughter, is given by God. He is the primary cause of faith. But faith has many secondary causes which produce it : the revelation of what must be believed, the sight of miracles, which are nothing else but a persuasive motive to faith,

and, finally, the assent of the soul to what must be believed.*

"Revelation is the cause of faith. How, in fact, is it possible to have faith if God does not reveal what must be believed, or if they to whom God has revealed it do not communicate to you the revelation which has been made to them? True faith is a living faith, and in order that it may live it requires food, it requires an object on which it may lay hold. Revelation is the secondary cause of faith, but a cause that proceeds from God, the Revealed Truth.

"The sight of miracles is the cause of faith ; not only in this sense, that miracles are wrought by God, but in this sense also, that God excites to faith by the

* This passage seems to be only a *résumé* of the doctrine of St. Thomas: 2. 2. Q. 6, A. 1. In accordance with that holy doctor, Marie Lataste has here used the word *cause* in several different senses. To judge of this properly, it should be remembered that assent to a revealed truth implies necessarily these three acts: I ought to believe, I will to believe, I do believe. The first has for its motive or determining cause the sight of miracles or any other proof which serves to establish the existence of a Divine revelation. The second has its determining cause in a supernatural good acting on the will. The third has for its proper and immediate motive the infallible testimony of God. The free assent of the soul includes at once the adhesion of the intelligence to the truth proposed and the command of the will prescribing that adhesion. The act of faith is a free affirmation ; as an affirmation, it has its efficient cause or its immediate principle in the intelligence enlightened by Divine light ; as it is free, its principle is in the will moved by grace.

The word *assent*, as employed by Marie Lataste, corresponds to the Latin words—*assensio* and *assensus*. Taken in the sense of *assensio*, it is active and may justly be called the efficient cause or principle of faith. In the sense of *assensus*, it is passive and signifies the very act of faith ; in scholastic language, it is the *formal* cause. *Note of Jesuit Examiners.*

sight of miracles. It is thus a secondary and insufficient cause. And have you not a proof of this in what took place during My life? How many were witnesses of My miracles, and yet how few had faith! This is why miracles are as much a motive as a cause of faith.

"The assent of the soul to truth is a cause of faith; not in this sense, that the soul can of itself receive and admit the eternal truth which is proposed to it,—this is false, because such act surpasses the powers of human nature,—but in this sense, that God gives the soul the inclination and the power to attain to faith.

"The advantages of faith to a soul are immense. Faith is a weapon against the world; it triumphs over it and treads it under foot. For by faith the soul resists the concupiscence of the flesh, because it knows that everything in this world will pass away, and one thing alone will remain: the good and the evil which will have been done. It resists the concupiscence of the eyes, because it knows that there is one only treasure which thieves cannot take away nor rust consume, God. It resists the pride of life, because the sight of a God humiliated, crucified, and dead for men, makes it know the nothingness, the wretchedness, and the sin of man, which does not permit him to take pride in himself.

"Faith is a buckler against Satan and his darts. Vainly will he endeavour to strike one who has faith, draw him into rebellion, or make him fall into sin. He who has faith knows that Satan seeks his ruin and damnation; he knows that God desires his salvation and his happiness; and he will hearken to God and repulse Satan.

"Faith consequently turns away from sin. He

who resists the world and Satan has no longer but one other enemy, himself and his passions; but he has in him the same power to combat himself as to repel his first two enemies; he fights and triumphs over himself and his passions, which become to him the occasion of great merit.

“Faith produces sanctification of the heart. It makes a man fly sin, and consequently it preserves grace, which is a state of sanctity; it makes him confess his sin when he has had the weakness to commit it; it makes him expiate it by penance. Thus it is a source of sanctification to the soul.

“Faith produces fear, not servile fear alone, that is to say, the fear of Hell, the fear of punishment, but the fear of separation from God, the fear of not loving Him, of not serving Him faithfully, of not being united to Him on earth and in Heaven.

“Faith works miracles. He who has faith moves mountains.

“Faith causes the prayers addressed to God to be granted.

“Faith exalts the dignity of man on earth, and deifies him by making him a partaker of the divine life, of which it is the beginning and the origin in man.

“Finally, faith insures eternal life, because he who has faith lives in justice, and performs good and holy works, which will be the ground of his recompense in eternity.

“What I have now said to you of faith ought to make you esteem it greatly, desire it more and more, and excite you to increase it as much as you can, by doing nothing contrary to that gift which the Lord has been pleased to bestow upon you.”

8. *Of hope ; natural, supernatural, and criminal ; nature of the virtue of hope ; the act of hope ; objects, effects, and necessity of hope.*

"I will now speak to you of hope.

"My daughter, there are three kinds of hope : natural hope, supernatural hope, and criminal hope.

"Natural hope is an inclination which is to be found in every individual, and makes him tend towards a natural end which he believes to be good and in which he thinks he shall find happiness.

"Supernatural hope, or the virtue of hope, is a supernatural habit which God imparts to the soul to make it expect with a sure confidence eternal life and the means of obtaining it by the help of God.

"Criminal hope is but a nominal hope. The very term hope implies good as its object ; but what good is to be expected from crime ? Justly did the Prophet say : 'Trust not in iniquity.'* Such trust is vain, deceitful, and false.

"Criminal hope may be understood in three ways : hope founded on self, hope founded on others, hope founded on vanity.

"The first is criminal. What is man, My daughter, that he should hope in himself ? Is not man incapable of being sufficient to himself, of defending himself, and meriting the reward of eternity ? Man cannot be sufficient to himself, for it is of the essence of beings drawn from nothing that they tend to nothing, unless the action of God sustains them. Man is weak, and the devil would speedily draw him to evil by his stratagems and his craft, his power and his malice, if the mercy of God did not at every moment uphold

* Psalm lxi. 10.

him. Man cannot merit anything by himself, and thought, which seems to be the primary possession of reasonable man, thought itself, if it wears a character of supernatural goodness, is not his own, for it comes to him from God. Consequently, to put his trust in himself is to do an injury to God, it is to do evil, it is to work his own ruin.

“Hope founded on others is a criminal hope. In whom would you rest your hope, My daughter, if you cannot rely upon yourself? In your family, your friends, or the powerful of this world? But all mankind united together are the very personification of weakness; they are more fragile than a reed, and to count on them is to be surely deceived and confounded in the hour of peril. Your hope must rest on God, and stay itself ever on Him; He will not deceive you, and one day you will be able to say: ‘Lord, I have hoped in Thee; I shall never be confounded.’

“Hope in vanity is a criminal hope. To place your hope in vanity is to reckon upon life, which is fleeting and transitory, like smoke carried away by the wind; it is to hope in renown, in the glory or esteem of men; and renown, glory, and esteem vanish together with life in the face of Eternity; finally, it is to hope in riches and in the goods of this world; but riches, the goods of this world, and the world itself will have an end; and can a solid hope be placed on that which will have a term and an end? Hope in vanity is a vain hope, a hope which estranges the soul from God, and is consequently culpable and criminal.

“The only true hope is supernatural hope. I will instruct you in its nature, act, object, effect, necessity, and subject.

“The nature of hope is, in fact, a habit, a super-

natural inclination. Consequently, hope is a gift of God ; everything supernatural comes from God and surpasses the powers of human nature. By this inclination man has his eyes constantly fixed on future goods ; he contemplates them, he expects them, with courage, with firmness, with assurance of obtaining them, because he knows that God will grant him the means necessary for his acquiring them and becoming one day their possessor. He who has the virtue of hope forgets himself to abandon himself entirely to God and repose in Him.

“The act of hope is, in fact, a looking forward, a sure expectation, and when you make an act of hope, when you say to God : ‘My God, I hope for Thy grace in this life and the vision of Thy glory in Heaven’ ; you say in effect : ‘My God, I expect Thy grace in this life and the sight of Thy glory in the other.’ I told you that this expectation is sure, because it rests on secure foundations, the succour of the omnipotence of God and His boundless mercy, His infinite liberality, and His eternal desire that you should attain to the possession of that for which you look.

“The object of hope is the enjoyment of eternal beatitude : this is the primary object of your hope, the possession of God. The secondary object is the graces of God, the succours of God, the protection of your Saviour, the effusion of My merits upon you, the patronage of Mary, which will keep danger far from you.

“And do you know, My daughter, the happy effects which hope will produce in your soul ? It will excite you to do penance for your sins, because you will hope to obtain pardon for them ; it will give you strength and courage in dangers, because with it

you will not rely on yourself but on the arm of God, who overthrows all your enemies ; it will deliver you from perils, for God never forsakes those who trust in Him. See how He delivered Daniel and Susanna who hoped in Him. It will make you triumph over temptations, because you will have the strength of hope and the desire of seeing it realised, which will enable you to resist temptations with firmness ; and this firm resistance is always followed by victory. It will enlighten your intelligence. To hope in God is to draw nigh to Him : now, God is light, and His light causes the day to shine amid darkness and manifests the truth. It will guard and preserve the goodness of your intentions. You will hope only for what is good ; consequently you will desire only what is good, and thus also, My daughter, hope will be to you a source of a multiplicity of good works which you would not have performed without it.

“Now, My daughter, you ought to have hope, not only for a few days, or a few years, as long as you enjoy the blessings of God, as long as you are in the state of grace : you ought to have it always. You ought to hope in time of temptation as well as of affliction, during dryness of soul as well as in a state of sin.

“You ought to hope in time of temptation. Then it is, above all, that your hope ought to be strong ; hope must be the buckler with which you repel your temptations. Now, you do not hope if you procure yourself temptations ; if you do not shun them you are guilty of presumption. You do not hope if you fix your eyes only on your frailty and do not reflect on the punishment due to your defeat under temptation. This is blindness. You do not hope if you do

not pray when tempted : it is to incur the certainty of falling into sin. Hope, then, My daughter, in the hour of temptation.

“Hope in time of affliction. Hope, because God never abandons the unhappy ; hope, because God will put an end to yóur afflictions ; hope, because God will give you complete security in the very midst of your tribulations.

“Hope during dryness of soul and in poverty, as a servant rests his hopes in the fortune of his master, and, like that servant, hope that God will give you the food of which you have need, the help which is indispensable to sustain you, a shelter to cover you, and you will not be disappointed in your hope.

“Hope when you are in a state of sin. Why, My daughter ? Because God is a physician who knows how to heal the infirmity of your soul, who can restore it to health and desires to do so.

“What I have now said to you, My daughter, shows you the necessity of hope. Without it you cannot obtain Heaven, because God will not give it except to those who hope for it. Only they who hope for it do, in fact, what is necessary for attaining it, and no one will attain it unless he has merited it.

“In whom can or ought hope to be found ? Hope is not in Heaven, where the angels and the elect enjoy the vision of God. If they possess it, they no longer look for its possession ; consequently they have not hope. Hope is not in Hell. The devils and the damned know that they are separated for ever from God. They do not therefore expect the fruition of His vision and of His glory ; consequently they are without hope. Hope was among the souls which awaited My coming and the happiness of Heaven which I was to

give them by the satisfaction of My Cross offered to My Father. Hope is in Purgatory, among the souls which have not yet satisfied the justice of God, and wait for the moment when they shall enjoy happiness. Hope is among men whilst they are upon earth. It is, in fact, in life that Heaven is set before them as a recompense, and that they strive to obtain it by the acts of virtue they perform.

“Have a firm hope in God, My daughter, a firm hope in Me. This virtue is as an arrow which pierces My Heart, not to cause Me suffering, but that I may let the flood of My mercy flow over the soul which hopes in its Saviour. Forward, My daughter; walk on in this beauteous way of holy hope; you will not be disappointed.”

9. *Of charity; essential, personal, and virtual; nature and excellence of the virtue of charity; subject of charity; of the three perfections of charity; the signs of charity; its object: charity toward God, ourselves, and our neighbours; the order to be followed in charity. Who is our neighbour? How ought we to love him? Eulogium on charity.*

After speaking to me thus the Saviour Jesus paused awhile and regarded me with an expression of kindness which penetrated to the very depths of my heart. I was still on my knees before Him. I felt an inexpressible charm in His words. I feared for a moment that He would not continue conversing with me. I much desired to hear Him speak again. It seemed to me that He read my desire in my soul, and I said to Him: “Lord, I wish that Thou shouldst go on speaking to me; but Thy will, not mine, be done.”

"My daughter," He said, "I desire to converse yet awhile with you, and to speak to you of charity.

"Charity is threefold, and you may consider it in its essence, which is God ; in its Person, which is the Holy Ghost, and the gift which God makes of it to man, that is to say, the virtue of charity.

"Charity is the essence of God ; it is that which constitutes the Divinity ; charity is God. Charity in God is not a simple accident, that is to say, something which might not exist in Him : charity is the very being of God.

"Charity is the Person of the Holy Ghost. In fact, the Person of the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, is the eternal love of the Father for the Son and of the Son for the Father. The Holy Ghost is the bond of the Father and of the Son, and this bond proceeds from the Father and from the Son ; He is in the Father and in the Son ; He is nevertheless distinct* from Them, and yet He is but one with the Father and the Son. The Father is charity ; the Son is charity ; the Holy Ghost is charity. Nevertheless I say that charity is the Person of the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and from the Son, and who unites by charity, which is Himself, the Person of the Son to the Person of the Father.

"Charity, as a virtue, is the gift which God makes

* In the manuscript the word is *séparé*. As it is repugnant to every expression in the context, it was deemed right to replace it by the proper term. This was, in fact, only to correct the inadvertence by Marie Lataste herself ; for in Section 7 of Book IX. we find the following words : "The Incarnate Wisdom is God, the Three Divine Persons inseparable from Each Other ;" and in Section 1 of Book I. : "The Father is distinct from the Son ; the Holy Ghost is distinct from the Father and from the Son." *Note of Jesuit Examiners.*

to man of the supernatural movement of his heart towards the Divinity, as the object of his love. It is of charity as a virtue that I wish to speak to you.

“Charity, My daughter—note this well—differs from love, benevolence, friendship, and affection. These are often confounded one with the other. I wish you to have a clear and distinct idea of this, in order that you may better understand the nature of charity.

“Love is a generic term denoting the natural inclination towards anything good or bad; it is a passion of the soul. The term is applied to the inclination, the propension, towards something for the sake of the good that is in it. Thus persons love a flower, a habitation, or place. This love may be called the love of desire.

“But when an object or a person is thus loved, and some good is desired for such object or person, this love is called benevolence, because good is desired to that which is loved.

“Friendship includes more than benevolence. It is benevolence when good is desired to some one without there being any reciprocity on his part. Friendship requires such reciprocity. Friendship consists in loving and being loved, in loving and knowing that you are loved. Between two friends there is a mutual intercommunication of heart.

“Charity is the love of God founded on the future communication of beatitude. Charity addresses itself primarily to God alone; it has only God for its object; secondarily, it addresses itself to men, in whom is seen the image of God, and because God has willed it as a condition of the communication of His own happiness.

“Charity is a virtue or a supernatural gift intrinsically inherent in the soul, by which man loves God above everything because of His perfections, and his neighbour in God and for God.

“Charity is above all the other virtues, because of its necessity, its works, its duration, and its dignity.

“Its necessity is evident. Although you should possess all other spiritual gifts, if you have not charity these gifts avail nothing to your salvation ; and with charity, although you had nothing more, you would assuredly be saved.

“Faith itself, that faith which removes mountains, would profit you nothing without charity. Martyrdom, if it could be suffered without charity, would profit you nothing. The conversion of the whole world brought about by your words, without charity, would profit you nothing.

“There is no virtue without charity, no virtue that is real, living, operative. Virtue, in fact, is a movement towards good. Now, the supreme good is God ; in order to tend towards Him it is necessary to know Him and to love Him. You do not go towards one whom you do not love ; you do not seek him, you do not desire to enjoy his presence, you are not eager to please him. Charity makes you love God, makes you desire Him, makes you wish to please Him, in order that He may draw nigh to you and you to Him. Charity attaches you to Him ; this is the special character of the movement towards good. As there are many virtues each must have its own particular movement. The virtue of faith moves the soul towards God and disposes it to affirm His existence ; the virtue of hope moves the soul towards God and disposes it to expect the fruition of His vision ; the

virtue of charity moves the soul towards God and disposes it to attach itself to Him. The movement of the virtue of charity is the life of the two movements given to the soul by the virtues of faith and hope. A man may have faith and hope without charity ; but this faith and this hope are without colour, without force, without any fruitful and prolific action. You have faith, but you have not charity ; this faith will turn to your ruin and condemnation ; this faith is not then a true virtue, a living virtue, since every virtue ought to conduce to the glory and beatification of him who possesses it. You have hope ; but what, then, is the foundation of this virtue ? What can you hope for if you do not love God ? Do you look for the vision of His glory ? But God grants it only to those who love Him. You do not love Him, and therefore you will have no part in the recompense which He gives His friends.

“Charity, My daughter, is the way which leads to Heaven. You could not re-enter your house if there was no way you could follow ; in like manner, without charity you cannot get to Heaven.

“Consequently, of all the virtues charity is the most necessary ; it is that which you ought most to desire, most to preserve, most also to strive to augment.

“Charity is above all the other virtues, because of the excellence of its works. All the works produced by charity are good ; this is why I came to enkindle its fire on the earth, having but one only desire, that of seeing the whole world set on fire by its flames. He who has charity, who loves God, seeks to please Him, observes His law and His commandments, acts only to follow in everything His divine will.

“ He who has charity performs in consequence works of virtue, since charity is their foundation, and, as it were, the breath that inspires them. In fine, he who has charity, in doing good, avoids evil, in order that the good which he does may be preserved and abide, and that, loving God, he may do nothing which can grieve or displease Him.

“ Have a high esteem, then, for charity, which will obtain you so many merits for the life which will never pass away.

“ Charity is of all the virtues that which endures the longest. The duration of charity may be considered under three principal aspects, and under these three aspects it may be said that charity will never fall away, but will remain for ever. Charity ever remains in this sense, that it never falls into mortal sin ; so long as charity is in a soul, that soul has life, it preserves its life and shuns death, that is to say, sin.

“ Charity always remains in those who are confirmed in grace, like the Apostles, because grace gives charity, and with confirmation in grace is given also confirmation in charity.

“ Charity always remains, even after this life. Faith and hope end with life ; but after death charity is received into Heaven with the souls, and the happiness of these souls will consist in the preservation, and, still more, in the perfection of charity.

“ Charity is of all virtues the most precious, because it is that which imparts most to the soul. Faith directs the eye of the soul to God ; hope makes it expect Him ; charity gives it the possession of Him. Now, you know, the possession of anything is far preferable to beholding it or expecting it. Charity is also of all virtues the most estimable, because charity

is the virtue which most exalts a soul. It is that which raises the soul to God, which unites it to God, which crowns it in Him.

“Such, in few words, My daughter, is the nature of charity. What is the subject of the virtue of charity? In what proportion does it exist in souls? Can it increase, diminish, or be perfected, or does it remain always in the same state? What is the perfection of charity? Is it possible to have charity in absolute perfection on earth? You have never asked yourself this question. It is, however, good and useful to make such reflections and to ponder on the interior life of the soul. Without such reflections, a person gradually relaxes, falls into a state of torpor, and loses the supernatural good which he possesses.

“Listen to Me attentively. Charity, as I have already told you, does not end with life. It continues in Heaven. Charity does not exist in Hell, that abode of disorder and of eternal hatred of God. Charity is found on earth in souls which are in the state of grace.

“Charity resides principally in one of the faculties of the soul : that faculty is the will. It is the will, in fact, which lays hold on God, and attaches itself to Him from the moment He is presented to it by the intelligence.

“There are degrees in charity and in the gift of the virtue of charity which God grants to men. Its degree is greater or less according to the Divine will, and according to the dispositions which God discerns in a soul. When the virtue of charity is given to it, the soul can augment in itself the intensity of its charity. Charity increases in proportion as the soul draws nigh to God. Charity does not increase in a

sensible manner by each act of charity, but each act disposes the soul to an augmentation of charity, because each of these acts renders a man more prepared to act anew in accordance with charity. He who possesses charity can desire to augment it more and more, and he always finds in himself a capacity which is never filled.

“There are three degrees in charity, and this will show you that it is susceptible of increase and progress. Charity such as it is communicated by the grace of God; charity not only planted in the soul, but sustained and strengthened; and lastly, perfect charity, a charity of which nothing can deprive the soul.

“There are three kinds of perfection in charity: the perfection of charity in God; the perfection of charity in heaven; and the perfection of charity on earth. In God; for He is perfect, and God is charity; consequently, there is in Him perfection of charity. This divine perfection of charity which is God belongs to God alone. In heaven the perfection of charity consists in this, that all the powers of the soul are attached to God alone and can tend only to Him.

“The perfection of charity on earth is threefold and includes three degrees. Charity is perfection in one who gives himself entirely to the study of God, to the seeking of God, and of whatever appertains to God, forgetting all else and scarcely occupying himself with what is necessary to the support of his life. Charity is perfect in one who keeps his heart habitually united to God, in such wise that he neither wills nor desires anything which is contrary to the love of God. Charity is perfect in one who tends towards God, not only by the fulfilment of the commandments, but also by the practice of the evangelical counsels. Such is the

perfection of charity which is possible on earth ; absolute perfection of charity, or the highest conceivable degree of charity, is not possible on earth, because it is always possible to conceive a charity yet more perfect in one who possesses perfect charity.

“There is no need, My daughter, that I should spend many words in showing you that charity may diminish * and be lost. Adam had charity ; he lost it by disobedience. David had charity ; he lost it by his sin. Christians after their baptism have charity ; a single mortal sin is sufficient to make them lose it. In fact, My daughter, to sin mortally is to withdraw and depart from God, it is to rebel against Him, and this departure and this rebellion are opposed to charity, they destroy and extinguish it. Mortal sin is the death of charity in a soul ; venial sin is the diminution of it. Venial sin is a small offence, a slight revolt, but nevertheless it is a revolt and an offence : such sins consequently diminish charity ; they do not separate the soul altogether, they do not banish it completely from God, nevertheless they are a beginning of separation and of banishment.

“Fly, then, My daughter, not only mortal sin but venial sin also, which is so hurtful to souls. Preserve charity as a precious treasure. If you have charity, you will recognise it by the signs I am about to point out to you. No one knows whether he be worthy of love or hatred,† unless it be revealed to him ; never-

* This statement must be understood of the virtue of charity considered, not in itself, but in its exercise, or in relation to its stability. This is, in fact, endangered by venial sin. It is an *indirect* diminution, as St. Thomas says (2. 2. Q. 24, A. 10). *Note of Jesuit Examiners.*

† Ecclesiastes lx. 1.

theless he may have a sufficient knowledge of the state of his conscience and of his soul if he pay attention to those principal signs which testify to the possession of charity.

“If you think of God willingly and with pleasure, be not disquieted : you are united to Him by charity. Where your heart is, there is your treasure, that is to say, God ; and he who has God for his treasure has nothing to fear.

“If you hear God spoken of with pleasure, if you lay up in your heart the good and edifying words you have heard, be not disquieted : you are united to Him by charity, you have nothing to fear.

“If you converse often with God, if you speak to Him in prayer, be not disquieted : you are united to Him by charity, you have nothing to fear.

“If you willingly give for God that which belongs to you and of which you have the disposal, be not disquieted : you are united to Him by charity, you have nothing to fear.

“If you suffer patiently the troubles of this life with the view of pleasing God, be not disquieted : you are united to Him by charity, you have nothing to fear.

“If you faithfully observe the commandments of God, be not disquieted : you are united to Him by charity, you have nothing to fear.

“If you love everything which God loves, everything which is pleasing to Him, if you love the works of virtue ; if you detest everything He detests, crime and vice, be not disquieted : you are united to Him by charity, you have nothing to fear.

“Such, My daughter, are the various signs by which you may recognise whether charity is in you. If you have charity, God loves you, because you

are pleasing to Him, and you are thus truly worthy of His love.

“It is not enough, My daughter, for you to know what charity is and what is the subject of charity, you must also know its object, in order that you may worthily practise the virtue of charity.

“Charity, in its practice, has four objects to which it ought to apply itself : God, your soul, your neighbour, and your body. God, who is above your soul ; your soul, which is what touches you most nearly after God ; your neighbour, who is your brother and your like ; lastly, your body, that companion of your exile and pilgrimage here below.

“God, My daughter, is the first object of your charity. You ought to love God from gratitude. It is from Him you have received all that you have, your soul and body, redemption and grace. He it is who provides you with all the means of reaching Heaven, and who desires to bestow it upon you and show you there the unveiled splendour of His glory.

“You ought to love God because He is infinitely amiable. You ought to love Him for His holiness, for His perfections ; for it is right to love, and men do love, all that is good, all that is excellent, all that is perfect. Now is there any excellence or perfection superior to that of God ?

“You ought to love Him, not only because He is God, but because He is your God, that is to say, your Master, your Lord ; that is, because He has, so to say, given Himself to you, and desires to be your possession, your God. Yes, God is yours, for He is your Father ; God is yours, for you are His child. Well, then, since so it is, love God, love Him with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, that is to say,

love Him as much as you can love Him, by consecrating to Him your mind, your will, your body, all that is in you. Not only love Him interiorly, but also manifest your love by exterior works. Love God always; love God in all the situations, in all the events, in all the acts, in all the desires of your life. Let your life be but one only thing, the continual love of God, greater than the love of yourself, of your relatives, of your friends, and of all the things of this world.

“This is a formal precept which is laid upon every reasonable creature, and the observance of which is productive of the greatest benefits, as its violation, on the contrary, entails grievous woes.

“Charity, or the love of God, is productive of the greatest benefits. In fact, it effaces the multitude of sins which a man may have committed, and I would say to all sinners who shall have imitated Mary Magdalen, what I said to herself: ‘All your sins are forgiven you because you have loved much.’* ”

“Charity is the light of the soul. When a person loves another he seeks every means to please him and be agreeable to him. When he loves God he seeks also to please Him, and he easily finds the means, because God draws nigh to one who loves Him. In drawing nigh to him He enlightens him, because He is the eternal light, whose brightness is not to be compared with any other light.

“Charity is the safeguard of the soul, not only inasmuch as it preserves it from evil, but also as it gives God Himself to be its guardian. God loves those who love Him, He guards them and preserves

* Comp. St. Luke vii. 47.

them from every misfortune, as a man guards and preserves from all harm the apple of his eye. It procures the aid of God in the necessities of life, it sustains the soul at the hour of death. Charity, in fact, gives courage in all trying situations, because it enables the soul to endure all for the love of God; it sustains it at the hour of death, for he who has charity does not fear death; on the contrary, he desires it, because after death he will possess God, not in hope, but in reality.

“Charity turns everything which is in man to his advantage and profit—well-being and suffering, consolation and sadness—because it refers everything to God, and this reference sanctifies everything, and every act that is sanctified is a blessing to him who performs it.

“Charity, finally, gives a foretaste of the fruition of Heaven here below. It exalts the souls that possess it to the highest degree of the contemplation of God, and keeps them thus absorbed in God, far removed from the despicable goods of earth, its pleasures, its honours, and its consolations. Everything, on the contrary, rises up against him who does not love God. Sin takes possession of his heart and makes him grovel on the earth; the contradictions of life and its manifold trials turn against him; the whole world, as the wise man says,* fights for God against the unwise who know not how to attach themselves to God and love Him.

“The virtue of charity is one in itself, but it has various objects. It is exercised towards God, it ought also to exercise itself on a man’s own self and

* Wisdom v. 21.

on his neighbour, according to the precept which I gave * concerning it when I was on earth: 'Thou shalt love God above all things and thy neighbour as thyself.'

"The Christian ought to love his neighbour as he loves himself. In the Christian, as in every individual, there are two things: soul and body. You ought, then, to love in yourself both your soul and your body, and in others also their soul and their body. This is the order you ought to follow in this love of yourself and of your neighbour:—

"First, you ought to begin by loving yourself, since the love you ought to have for your neighbour must be after the pattern of that which you ought to have for yourself. You ought to love your own soul more than that of your neighbour; that is to say, you ought to love your own soul before and in preference to that of your neighbour, but you ought to love the soul of your neighbour more than your own body, just as you ought to begin by loving your own body before that of your neighbour.

"Now, My daughter, why ought you to love your own soul more than that of your neighbour, or to love your own soul before that of your neighbour? This is easy to understand. You love God as the principle of good, and you ought to love yourself in God by charity in order to be admitted into society with God, who is to be your good. This future association of yourself with God is the reason of the love which you have for God, a love which will be the measure of your union with God. Now,

* Comp. St. Matthew xxxii. 37, 39; St. Mark xii. 30, 31; St. Luke x. 27.

the unity of participation with God is to be preferred by you to the union of many with you in this same participation, and consequently you ought to seek first your own union with God before that of others. You have the proof of what I say to you, My daughter, in this: that you are forbidden to commit the least sin in order to deliver any one from his sin, because such sin would deprive you, more or less, according to its malice, of participation in the Sovereign Good.

“But you ought to love the soul of your brother or your neighbour more than your own body. Thus you would be bound, My daughter, to expose your life, that is to say, the life of your body, to procure the salvation of any soul whatever, if by exposing your life, and even sacrificing it, you could save that soul. This would be the mark, My daughter, of a perfect, well-ordered, well-regulated charity. You are not bound to do this by the necessity of charity, that is to say, in order to have charity, but perfect charity inclines to this sacrifice on account both of the happiness you would procure for the soul you saved and of the glory which will accrue thereby to God.

“What I have said to you of the preference you must give to your own soul in your love ought to make you understand the preference you must also give your own body over the body of your neighbour.

“You ought to love your neighbour. Do you know who is your neighbour? Your neighbour is every reasonable being from whom you could receive any good in view of eternal life, or to whom you could render any good of that kind. Thus the angels reckon among your neighbours, because they obtain for you spiritual good, because they watch

over you, because some day you will share their happiness and be really and truly their neighbour. The elect in Heaven are your neighbours; they are part of the great human family to which you belong, and they obtain for you from God the aids which you need in order to attain to the happiness which they themselves possess. All the just upon earth are your neighbours, not only because they are disposed to do you good, but because you can do them good in your turn, and thus you ought to love with the love of charity the angels, the elect in Heaven, and the just upon earth. The souls in Purgatory are your neighbours; you can and you ought to pray for them, in order to relieve them in their sufferings and obtain their deliverance.

“Sinners are also your neighbours, and you ought to love them with charity. You ought to regard two things in them: their person and their sin. Their person is capable of partaking of the happiness of Heaven, and you ought to love their person; but the sin which is in them deserves your hatred and aversion. Do not confound the sin with the sinner. Hate the sin as God hates it, but love the sinner as God in His mercy loves him, since He wills not his death, but his conversion and his life.

“If the precept of charity extends to all men upon earth, to all souls in Purgatory, and to those who are partakers of the happiness of Heaven, it does not extend to the devils or to the damned. The devils and the damned have so deformed their nature that you ought not to love them, but to hate them as God hates them, who will hate them eternally.”

The Saviour Jesus said to me another day: “My daughter, if you desire worthily to fulfil the precept

of charity, take Me ever for a model. Consider with what love I have loved men, and you will see that it has three very distinct characters.

“I loved them gratuitously, that is to say, without having received anything from them, and without their loving Me first. If you loved only those who love you, My daughter, you would not love your neighbour. I loved men, not on account of the good they had done Me, but solely in order to do them good. It is thus you ought to love your neighbour, without expecting anything from him, and with the disposition of always doing him good if you can. I loved men, even My greatest enemies, My executioners, and on the Cross I begged My Father to forgive them. If you have enemies, if you meet with persons who vex and persecute you, so far from hating them, love them even more than your friends; this will be the means of conciliating them and making yourself more pleasing to God.

“I loved men with discretion. I never loved in them vice or sin. I healed the paralytic, saying to him: * ‘Thy sins are forgiven thee.’ I forgave the adulteress, saying to her: † ‘Go, sin no more.’ I forgave St. Peter, and a look from Me pierced his very soul.‡ I forgave the unbelieving Apostle, and he rose full of faith, saying: § ‘My Lord and my God!’ And the pardon I granted them was a sure proof of My love for them. I forgave all the sins of men upon the Cross, but this forgiveness was not the approval of their offences, but their condemnation through the

* St. Matt. ix. 2; St. Mark ii. 5; St. Luke v. 20.

† St. John viii. 11.

‡ St. Luke xxii. 61, 62.

§ St. John xx. 20.

splendid display of My mercy, since it needed the suffering of a God to efface sin. Thus, My daughter, you must love your neighbour, but nevertheless condemn and hate what is reprehensible in him, that is to say, vice and sin.

“I loved men with an exceeding and a fruitful love. I loved them with an exceeding love, for I left the glories of Heaven, I was made man, I humbled Myself even to the death of the Cross. I loved them with a fruitful love, and for My love gave them back life and opened to them Heaven. Love thus your neighbour, by despoiling yourself of your own will, by mortifying yourself, by sacrificing yourself for him, by labouring as much as you can for his salvation; thus you will truly love your neighbour, for you will love him as I Myself loved men.

“Love your neighbour, My daughter; love him in God and for God, and in loving your neighbour you will love God, and these two loves will make but one love, the love of God, although the objects and the acts of this love are distinct, because your love will always terminate, directly or indirectly, in God.

“Live in the love of God, in that love such as I have taught you, in the exercise of that virtue which I implant in all who receive My grace.

“If you have the love of God, if you live in charity, though you should have no roof over you but the sky, no food but that which public charity should offer you, no clothes but rags, you would be richer than those who possess boundless wealth if they love not God.

“If you live in charity, if you love God, charity will render everything in you lovable; it will draw to you the admiration of angels and of men, and infuse into

all your actions the sweetness and the fragrance of its influence.

“If you live in charity, if you have the love of God, you will be full of strength and energy, you will become capable of the greatest things, and nothing will be able to resist you.

“If you live in charity, if you have the love of God, your generous soul will be detached from everything and be ready for the greatest sacrifices. Nothing will surprise it, nothing will shake it, nothing will daunt it; you might pass through armies ranged in battle array, and your soul, calm and tranquil, would neither tremble nor fear.

“If you live in charity, if you love God, you will lay your troubles in His Bosom, you will pour your heart into the Heart of God, the only object worthy of your confidence, the only being capable of consoling you, and you will feel how sweet and delightful is the service of God in the midst of the greatest tribulations.

“If you live in charity, if you love God, you will cease to belong to yourself, God will be your Master, He will reign over you, He will speak to you, and you will obey Him without being able to resist Him, because the love you will have for Him will attract you to Him by the accomplishment of His will.

“O love, love, love! flame of charity, how is it that, desiring so strongly to communicate thyself, thou enkindlest so few hearts? Do you know why, My daughter? It is that it finds the entrance to souls closed against it, and that its arrows fall blunted on hearts as hard as rock. Pray God to dispose these hearts to receive and preserve grace; He will open them, He will soften them, and along with grace divine love will come and dwell within

them. The heart of a sinner is like a fair mansion filled with furniture worm-eaten and rotten, which the light of day does not penetrate, and which by its intolerable stench deters those from approaching it who would wish to do so. If divine love penetrates into that heart, it enlightens and illuminates it, it replaces the furniture that was in it with costly goods, and, in fine, it sheds through its whole interior a perfume whose sweet odour ascends from earth to Heaven, inviting the God of charity to come and take possession of it.

“My daughter, let us draw closer and closer the sweet ties which bind us to each other; let nothing be able to separate us, neither life nor death, neither men nor devils. Love Me each day more and more; as for Me, I shall not love you to-morrow more than I do to-day, but I will give you more sensible marks of My love. Open your soul to all the ardours of divine love and let its flames circulate with your blood in your veins. Offer yourself as a victim, and let your sacrifice be consumed by the fire of divine love. Love Me as I loved you when I was on earth. What labours, what fatigues, what sufferings you have cost Me! I gave My Life and My Blood to save you; and, not satisfied with having died once for you, I am ever with you here in the Sacrament of My Love. I abide here continually with My Body, My Soul, and My Divinity, out of love for you; do you, then, abide here in thought out of love for Me. When I instituted this sacrament I already knew all the outrages, the irreverences, the sacrileges, and the insults which I was to receive in it, but I knew how to content Myself with the small number of faithful souls who would honour Me therein and testify to Me their love. Be you of

this number, My daughter. Compensate Me by your love for the indifference and the insensibility of so many bad Christians. I have the right, and a very special right, to expect this from you.

“O sacred love, spread thyself over the earth and inflame all hearts! Let it, above all, inflame your heart, My daughter. Let it be to you the most precious of all treasures. Let it be the supreme beauty of your soul. Let it be the relief, the consolation, and the repose of your heart in all your sufferings and afflictions.

“O power of divine love over men! O power of divine love over God! It gives men to God; it makes God die for men.

“I died for the love of you, My daughter; give yourself, then, to your Saviour, to your God, for the love of Him. Respond to My love by your love, live for the love of Me, sacrifice yourself for the love of Me, die for the love of Me, for I have lived, I have suffered, I have died for the love of you.”

It was thus the Saviour Jesus spoke to me, and my soul was wholly penetrated by the ardour of His voice and the sweetness of His words.

10. *Of peace, the fruit of charity; of peace, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; of submission to the will of God produced by charity; advantages of that submission; of poverty, detachment, and liberty, effects of the virtue of charity.*

The Saviour Jesus said also, when discoursing to me on charity: “My daughter, I have instructed you in a general way respecting the fruits of the virtue of charity; I wish now to make you know them particularly and in detail.

“The principal fruits of the virtue of charity are peace, submission to the will of God, detachment from self, poverty, complete and absolute liberty, and good example.

“Peace, My daughter, is a fruit of the virtue of charity, but it is not a special virtue distinct from the other virtues. Peace consists in the concord of a man’s own desires, or that of his desires with the desires of others. Now, in whatever manner you regard it, peace is an effect of the virtue of charity. Charity, in fact, causes you to love God with your whole heart, that is to say, it makes you refer all things to God, and this reference to God is the union or the concord of all your desires. Charity is also the concord of all your desires with the desires of others, in all that is not contrary to the will of God. Charity, in fact, produces in you a love of your neighbour equal to that which you have for yourself; whence it follows that charity makes you follow the will of another as though it were your own will.

“Peace is not a special virtue, for all the acts which produce peace spring solely from the principle of charity. The effects of charity are different; nevertheless they do not on that account require a different cause.

“All wish for peace, seek for peace, but very few possess it, because there are few who have charity.

“Peace may be considered under three aspects: as temporal peace, spiritual peace, and eternal peace.

“Temporal peace is peace in the family, in cities, in empires; it comes from charity, because charity is the union of hearts, and the union of hearts is the peace of families, and the union of families is the peace of cities, and the union of cities is the peace of

kingdoms and of empires ; for charity is the accord, the agreement, of two persons, of many persons, of many different peoples. Where there is no charity there is no peace.

“Temporal peace is the peace or tranquillity of the body ; it is the concord between the spirit and the flesh, it is agreement amid different opinions.

“The body is in peace and tranquillity when it does not suffer and is free from maladies ; charity preserves this tranquillity and peace even in suffering and sickness, because charity causes these to be loved, and love is the preserver as it is the producer of peace.

“Charity maintains peace between the flesh and the spirit, because it subdues the flesh, and permits the spirit to remain united to God ; and this peace contributes to temporal well-being.

“Charity maintains peace amid different opinions, for peace does not consist in agreement in opinion, but in agreement in what is good and in what leads to eternal life. Diversity of opinion is not a rupture of peace, it is the rational and reasonable use of liberty in the active movement of the intellect, and nothing in this legitimate use can be adverse to peace. Charity even maintains it, because charity sees and puts a good interpretation on this active movement of the minds of others.

“If you have charity, My daughter, you will have this temporal peace. For if you have charity, if you love Me, you will turn to Me in bodily pain and sickness, in affliction or depression of heart, amid the contradictions or waywardness of your own mind ; you will come to Me without effort and tell Me your state with the sincerity and confidence of a child ; you will come and impart to Me your most secret,

most hidden, most interior troubles. I will receive you with affection, and in the tenderness of these effusions you will find yourself freed from the burden which might have oppressed you, and will preserve the peace and evenness of your soul. How many afflicted persons, suffering and rudely tried, would endure their trials, their sufferings and afflictions, if they had charity, without ever losing the peace and serenity of their souls; but without charity they are troubled, and nothing can console them. They would take Me for their confidant, and would find how much I deserve to be so, because I should love them with constancy and fidelity, never abandoning them when all others abandon or draw off from them, because I should compassionate their sorrows and console them. Every one has his troubles here below. If you were always entertaining a friend with your afflictions your conversation would become tiresome and disagreeable to him. But for Myself, My daughter, not only shall I listen to you, but My attention and My constancy will give you such consolation that you will even forget your troubles, and your complainings and outpourings will be but a conversation full of happiness with your Saviour and your God.

“He who has charity has peace, because he knows what to do that he may have concord in himself in everything that concerns him. He has peace, because he hates himself, because he hates the world, because he has confidence in God.

“He hates himself, that is to say, he does not seek his own personal ease, convenience, or satisfaction, and then, whether sick, suffering, poor, or in trouble, he is always calm, always at peace. His flesh does not domineer over his spirit, he is calm, and always at

peace. He does not occupy himself with what others think or feel about him, he is calm and always at peace.

“He who has charity hates the world and despises it. He knows that the world will pass away, and, with it, all that is in the world ; he is not affected by its words, its judgments, or its acts ; he does not seek its esteem or its affection ; he regards only My judgment, the knowledge I have of him, the friendship I have for him : that suffices him and he is calm and always at peace.

“He who has charity places all his confidence in God. True charity cannot exist along with distrust, but where there is no distrust a man fears nothing, dreads nothing, he is calm and always at peace. He who has charity places all his confidence in God, consequently he expects and endures all the trials which He sends him ; he has no other will but His will, and this conformity of will is peace.

“Have charity, therefore, and you will have temporal peace ; and you will also have spiritual peace.

“You will have spiritual peace, that is to say, peace with God. Peace with God is concord between yourself and God, and it is charity which bestows it on you. If you have charity you always do the will of God, you faithfully fulfil His law and His commandments. This fulfilment necessarily preserves you in serenity and peace of heart, for it unites you to God, and makes you live by His life. There is, therefore, conformity of will, conformity of life ; you have true peace, spiritual peace.

“However great a sinner one may have been who possesses charity, by the very fact of having charity he has peace ; for the recollection of past faults

preserves from sin, and where there is no sin, there peace reigns. The recollection of past faults is the remembrance of a state which exists no longer, and it causes a better appreciation of the present state. The remembrance of past faults which charity has effaced recalls the forgiveness received, the measures taken to obtain this forgiveness, the confession made of them to the sacred minister, the sorrow and compunction of the heart, the giving of self to God for ever ; and the remembrance of forgiveness is spiritual peace. The remembrance of forgiveness is peace, because it recalls the work of God in the sinner, and the words He addressed to him : ‘ Courage, My son ; fear not. Come to Me ; if you are weak, I am strong ; if you are helpless, I am almighty ; if you are poor, I am rich, I will give you everything you need. Come and draw at My feet the healing waters of grace, those waters full of strength springing up unto everlasting life. Come, I will be your happiness ; happiness is found nowhere but with Me. You have sought it far from Me, and it has eluded you ; you have desired to draw from the muddy cisterns of the world, of Satan, and of the passions, and you have found only poisoned waters, which do not quench thirst but consume more than fire itself. Come to Me, have confidence in Me, hearken to My voice, accept My love, and you shall have all the happiness that can be had upon earth.’ The remembrance of these words invigorates the soul, it keeps it turned towards God, and gives it peace.

“Charity gives eternal peace, that is to say, Heaven. Eternal peace, as its name indicates, will never pass away ; it is the reward of the soul which possesses charity when God calls it to Himself. The peace of

Heaven is the happiness of Heaven ; peace is also happiness on earth. Charity gives peace in Heaven and on earth. Continue, therefore, in the state of charity ; live to-day in charity, and you will have peace also on earth to-day, to enjoy it to-morrow in Heaven.

“There is a great resemblance between peace and submission to the will of God. He who has peace is submissive to the will of God, and he who is submissive to the will of God has peace. It is not possible to be submissive to the will of God without having charity, as neither is it possible without it to have peace. Submission to the will of God is therefore also produced by charity. Submission to the will of God is, however, not the same thing as peace. Peace is a state of soul produced by charity, a state of calm and tranquillity. Submission to the will of God is more than a state ; it is an active, operative inclination, an inclination which makes a man do whatever God wills, endure whatever God wills him to endure, and expect only what God shall will to give him. Such is submission to the will of God.

“Now, submission to the will of God is the most glorious homage which man can offer to God, and the act most profitable to man.

“It is the most glorious homage which man can offer to God. What, in fact, is submitting to God ? It is to accomplish His will, to do what He desires, to grant Him what He asks ; it is to acknowledge that He is Sovereign Master, that nothing is superior to Him ; it is to adore His designs, to please Him in everything, to testify devotion to Him, to give Him convincing proofs of the love felt for Him ; in a word, it is to give to God everything a man has, for it is to

strip himself entirely, and to act in everything according to the good pleasure of God.

“And can man do anything more pleasing to God? No, My daughter. Submission to the will of God is preferred by Him to all manner of fasts, austerities and sacrifices; to the most fruitful, the most abundant apostolate, in case He does not ask for any of these things. What would you say of a servant who should labour continually to promote the prosperity and the wealth of his master, who should descant everywhere on his master's goodness, be profuse in rich offerings to him, and yet refuse to obey him or do his will? What would you say of that servant if his master could not speak a word of blame or remonstrance to him without his rebelling against him and showing his discontent? Would you not prefer a servant who was less energetic but more obedient, more submissive, more self-restrained, more respectful? Well, My daughter, so it is with God.

“God asks of you a full and entire submission to His holy will. If you love Him, you will yield it to Him. You will accept the maladies, sufferings, trials, which He imposes upon you, saying: ‘My God, Thy will, not mine, be done.’ You will never complain, you will receive all as the admonitions of God, as testimonies of the friendship of God, who desires to purify you more and more by the trials He sends you, that you may be more closely united to Him.

“Not that you may not therefore never complain. No, My daughter; but you must complain to God as did the prophet. This complaining is not a real complaining; it is a cry of prayer, a beseeching, an appeal to God for aid—a prayer and a beseeching

dictated by submission. How pleasing to God is a soul thus submissive to His holy will !

“Submission to the will of God is also the act most profitable to man. Why so, My daughter? Because to follow this will is to walk in the right way, to walk in what is good, to follow the guidance of God, and God guides the soul only in the ways of goodness and truth. What is it you seek for on earth? Truth. What is it you desire? The possession of truth. You will find it in submission to the will of God, because you will find God, and God is truth. God made men in order to bring them to Himself, and He brings them to Himself by many different ways which His will has traced out. To go to Him it is necessary to follow His ways, and to follow His ways it is necessary to be submissive to His will. He who is submissive to His will advances towards God, and reaches Heaven. Submission to the will of God is therefore the act most profitable to man.

“Let God then, My daughter, send you pains, sufferings, tribulations, maladies, infirmities, contradictions, insults—let Him try you in every manner of way, be submissive to His will. Let this thought, ‘God wills it,’ aid and support you. Have confidence in this will and go forward; you will reach Heaven.

“Submission to the will of God is not an advantage only as regards Heaven, it is also profitable for time. This submission makes contradictions, troubles, sufferings, and trials appear as nothing, because it causes them to be loved, as coming from God and from His will. Submission to the love of God extinguishes all hatreds and aversions except that of sin. One who is submissive to the will of God exclaims: ‘O my soul, why should you regard this thing with aversion? Is

there anything you ought to hate upon earth except the sin and the faults that are in you? O my God, let Thy will be done in all things, and do Thou give me an abiding hatred of sin and of my own imperfections.'

"If charity produces submission it produces also detachment. God, My daughter, suffices to one who loves Him, and only he who loves Him is truly detached from everything.

"God suffices the soul that loves Him. To love God, My daughter, is to possess Him; to possess God is to possess the Sovereign Good—the good that never passes away, the good that will abide eternally. Now, he who possesses this good cannot attach himself to perishable goods—neither to life, nor to creatures, nor to riches; he is completely separated from them, and uses them only according to the designs of God. He cleaves to nothing; thus he more easily raises himself to God, and is not held back as it were by bonds which tie him down to earth. He accepts everything as coming from God; he makes use of everything to go to Him, but does not hold to one thing more than to another; he has but one sole attachment, attachment to God.

"He is not attached to life, he would willingly make the sacrifice of it; and at the hour determined by the Lord he will calmly give back his spirit into the hands of God.

"He is not attached to creatures, whether on account of their beauty, which is fleeting and transitory, or of their qualities, which pale before the attributes of God, or on account of the ties of blood, because he has a Father in Heaven. He is not attached to riches, rust consumes and thieves carry

them away; he is not attached to glory or the honours of life, his glory consists in serving God.

“God to him is everything, and nothing will separate him from God; neither life nor death, nor creatures rational or irrational; nor the world, nor Satan, because the love of God is more powerful than all powers whatsoever, and nothing can resist it.

“I commend to you, My daughter, this universal detachment from all created things, and detachment from yourself. This is the true token of charity. The tree is known by its fruits, and detachment is the product of charity.

“Among the different sorts of detachment, there is one which I recommend to you among all, poverty.

“There are two kinds of poverty: voluntary poverty and the poverty of necessity. They who not only are detached from the goods of this world, but voluntarily strip themselves of them, acquire eternal riches and a happiness which will never end. They who live in poverty, because they are destitute of everything, ought to beware of desiring riches. Rather let them deem themselves happy in being in the same state as that in which I was on earth together with My Mother. Let them take heed not to tarnish the glorious state which God has given them by attachment to the goods of this world and its riches. Let them say to themselves: ‘We are little in the eyes of men, but we are great in the eyes of God.’ Let them say to themselves: ‘We are despised by men, but God’s judgment is different from that of man.’ Let them say to themselves: ‘We are poor as regards this world’s goods, but we are rich in the goods of Eternity.’ The embarrassing cares which wealth entails, the troubles and inquietudes it causes, retard the soul’s advance

toward Heaven and sometimes turn it aside ; but for us—nothing stops us on the way—we are certain of going to Heaven ; for Heaven is God, and God is the possession and the riches of the poor.

“My daughter, the poor ought to be sustained in their state of poverty by the sight of My poverty and that of My Mother, by the hope of seeing their poverty disappear and changed into immense and boundless riches. It is still charity which fosters and maintains these sentiments of faith and hope.

“In fine, My daughter, charity will give you true liberty, the liberty of the children of God. I do not mean that liberty which is disorder, that liberty which works evil. No ; that is not liberty. Liberty consists in voluntary submission to law. Now, he who truly loves God, loving Him always, will always do what He commands him and requires of him ; he will submit without difficulty, because he loves Him and does not wish to displease Him in anything. The will of God will be the rule of his conduct, and he will follow that rule because he loves God. He will do whatever he wills, and consequently will be free, because he will never will anything but what God wills. Hold fast to this liberty, which is the only true liberty, preserve it always in yourself by preserving always the love of God. Grow in the love of God, and your liberty will increase, because you will be more and more disposed to do nothing but what is pleasing to God.”

BOOK IX.

OF THE MORAL VIRTUES AND THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1. *Of prudence and discretion ; of docility ; of solicitude and circumspection.*

“MY daughter,” said the Saviour Jesus to me one day, “I wish to speak to you of the virtues of prudence, of justice, of fortitude, and of temperance, that is to say, of the moral virtues. These virtues, as their name denotes, serve to direct the conduct of the Christian. They are given with sanctifying grace.

“Prudence is among the moral virtues what faith is among the theological virtues. It affects the intelligence, the action of which precedes that of the will and directs all the forces, all the powers, that are in man. There are many kinds of prudence, many parts which enter into the constitution of prudence, many virtues which are, as it were, the companions of prudence.

“The prudence by which a confessor, a magistrate, an emperor guide themselves is different from the prudence by which they direct those who are subject to them, or who ask counsel of them. There are then two kinds of prudence.

“Here are the different parts which constitute prudence; but, for your better understanding, I will tell you first in what prudence consists. Prudence is that inclination of the soul which makes a man direct his actions with a sure knowledge, so as to effect what is good. Since such is the nature of prudence, I say that memory, intelligence, docility, ability, reason, foresight, circumspection, precaution are so many integral parts of prudence. Memory, which recalls the past; intelligence, which gives the knowledge of the present; docility, which disposes you to receive instruction from others and to follow their counsels; ability, which enables you to interpret the past correctly; reason, which, by the knowledge of one thing, enables you to know another; foresight, by which you derive the means of arriving at the end proposed; circumspection, by which you observe the circumstances of an occurrence; and precaution, by which you provide against obstacles or dangers—without all these things there cannot possibly be any prudence. There is a weak side, and such prudence is not genuine prudence.

“The three powers of the virtue of prudence are good counsel, right judgment, and a clear and perspicuous view.

“As I wish to treat solely of the supernatural virtue of prudence, I will speak to you only of that virtue and of the other secondary virtues which must of necessity be annexed to it: discretion, docility, solicitude, and circumspection. If you unite in yourself all that I shall say to you on the subject of prudence you will really possess that virtue.

“Prudence, as I have already told you, My daughter, is that inclination of the soul which makes a man

direct all his actions with a sure knowledge, so as to effect what is good. Prudence is the virtue of intelligence in action for working what is good. By prudence the intelligence consults as to the means of attaining to good ; it finds these means in the true judgment it forms of what it sees, and it employs these means by following the road which is able to lead it to the proposed end.

“As you may suppose, My daughter, prudence, that supernatural prudence which alone is capable of working supernatural good, which alone capacitates a man for attaining to a supernatural end, comes from God ; it is God who gives it and implants it in the soul.

“Ardently desire this virtue, ask it of God, and pray Him to develop it in you. Without it all the other virtues would lose their brightness and their beauty in you, they would even change easily into vices. For without prudence there is always some excess, defect, or failure in a man's acts, and consequently vice. Without prudence he is in danger of falling into the greatest dangers, because he walks like one who is blind, yet in full assurance of security, and at an hour when he least expects it he will find nothing under his feet but ruin and destruction. Without prudence a man cannot do good or avoid evil, because prudence shows what it is necessary for him to do and what to avoid, and prevents him taking good for evil and evil for good. Call to mind, My daughter, the Parable of the Ten Virgins in the Gospel : the five foolish virgins were virgins without prudence ; the wise virgins, on the contrary, were possessed of prudence ; and they alone found their lamps lighted at the coming of the Bridegroom.

“Ask prudence of God, He will grant it to you, and you will recognise it in your actions.

“You will be prudent if in all your actions you seek the good pleasure and glory of God, if your aim be by your acts of virtue to gain Heaven. You will be prudent if, in order to promote the glory of God and your own salvation, you study the laws of God; if you pray to know in everything the Divine will, and if you have recourse to reflection, or take counsel with others, because you distrust yourself. You will be prudent if, in the counsels you have received, you know how to distinguish what is good from what is not good, what is useful from what is unprofitable, what befits your vocation and your strength from what surpasses them or is opposed to your state of life. You will be prudent if you know how to distinguish what is best and most suitable for leading you to your end. You will be prudent if you master your will, and oblige it to do what is good, and to do it in the best manner possible.

“Thus, My daughter, you see, prudence is exercised on exterior moral actions; there is another kind of prudence which is exercised on the inward or interior works of the soul: this is discernment. Discernment is that spiritual prudence by which, in everything which concerns the interior, the good is distinguished from the evil, the true from the false, the better from what is good; in order to do what is good and what is best, lay hold on what is true, shun evil, and reject what is false.

“Even as God in the work of creation divided the water from the land, the land from the heavens, light from darkness, so the just man, by the discernment which grace gives him, discriminates all things in

that world which is within him, and which he moves and animates, setting everything in its place, and reserving for God that which is and ought to be God's.

"Discernment is the eye of the soul; he who is without discernment is a poor blind creature, the victim of a thousand evils which he cannot avoid because he does not see them. Discernment imparts the knowledge of what is good, what is better, what is perfect, what is evil, and what is most evil.

"Discernment makes a man know his duties toward his neighbour, towards relatives, friends, and strangers, towards the saints and the elect of God, towards the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. Discernment makes a man know when he ought to rest and when he ought to labour, when he ought to speak and when to be silent, teaches a man the regulation of his thoughts, and their order in relation to God, to himself, and to creatures.

"In order that prudence may be complete and perfect, it must be followed by docility in hearkening to the counsels of God, the counsels of wise men, the counsels of each man's individual mind, when it is in accord with reason and the judgment of those who are wiser and more experienced.

"All the saints have practised docility, and because they were docile they were prudent, and prudence sanctified them. Moses was docile in hearkening to the counsels of Jethro, St. Paul to those of Ananias, and the first saw God face to face, the second was rapt even to the third heaven. How much more ought you to be docile, My daughter, if you desire to attain to perfection.

"In fact, there are numberless things which prudence and discernment would dictate, and the

wisest man cannot of himself perceive them all; consequently nothing is more necessary than docility in hearkening to others and doing what they advise. I do not mean by this that you ought to listen to and accept the counsels of every chance comer. No, My daughter; do not ask and do not take counsel of any but such as are mature, thoughtful, and prudent persons, who are themselves full of docility and whose speech is clear and open, free from dissimulation, vagueness, or malevolence.

“Docility will lead you to follow in everything the advice of your director, as also to disclose to him all that passes in the interior of your heart. It will lead you to give up your own judgment and conform it to his, and this docility will supply for whatever deficiency of prudence and discretion there may be in you.

“Be docile, My daughter, and be also full of solicitude to perform your actions with a good intention.

“Solicitude is the promptness of the soul in performing what prudence and discernment have shown it to be conformable with the rules of the true and the good. Solicitude is the eager ardour of the soul to do good. Nothing is more precious than this solicitude; it precludes tepidity and prevents falling into sin. See what solicitude there is among people of the world to increase their fortune, to heap up glory and honour in their path of life! They neglect nothing; they are always busy and active. And what is the glory of the world, what are the riches of earth, as compared with the glory of Heaven and the treasures of Eternity?

“Solicitude, My daughter, will lead you to do your

good works with earnestness and carefulness, at seasonable times and in suitable places. Solicitude will make you remove obstacles and difficulties, and perform each action as though it were the last of your life.

“In fine, My daughter, that prudence may be complete and perfect, it is necessary also to have circumspection, that is to say, a fixed attention of the soul to everything relating to the action it is about to undertake, so that it may be done according to the rules of the true and the good, that all obstacles may be removed, and you may not be obliged to abandon what you have once begun.

“Without circumspection it will be impossible to do what is good ; this is why, in sending My disciples to preach the good tidings of the Gospel, I said to them : ‘Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves ; be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves.’* By these words I desired simply to recommend to them circumspection. This is why they ought to be simple as doves, that is, do whatever I enjoined them and trust in Me ; wise as serpents, that is, full of caution amidst the crimes, the vices, and the scandals they would meet with in the world. Now, the moment the serpent perceives danger, he conceals his head in order to shield it ; even thus ought you, on the approach of danger, to seek shelter for your soul, that it may not be overcome. And what perils there are in the world ! Satan is always ready, like a roaring lion, to devour you. The passions are always ready to be let loose. Virtue itself, in others as in yourself, becomes a stumbling-block. How necessary then it is to keep your eyes

* St. Matthew x. 16.

open in order to discern dangers and also the means of avoiding them.

“Circumspection avoids extremes ; it walks in the right path where virtue is to be found ; it scans, it weighs the means to arrive at the end proposed ; it takes counsel in case of doubt ; it is in no hurry to act ; it waits for reflection and an opportune moment. Nevertheless, it does not procrastinate so as to let the occasion of doing good escape. Circumspection takes the measure of all thoughts, all words, all actions, all sentiments ; it does not trust all men, or disclose what should be kept secret. Circumspection does not fear without grounds for fear, and amidst the dangers which are not of its own seeking it trusts in God and remains unmoved ; it does not let itself be deceived or seduced by the exterior ; it penetrates to the bottom of things, and then decides and acts. Circumspection does not give a ready credence to everything ; it concedes nothing without reflection ; it does not judge without reasons ; it makes no promise which it cannot easily keep ; it speaks little, and is seldom angered.

“O My daughter, be circumspect, be docile, be careful, study to acquire discrimination and prudence ; I say this even for the good of your material and earthly life ; do everything according to the will of God and His Divine Son, your Saviour God and Man in one, and the peace which will give you spiritual life, and repose in the practice of good, will give you also peace of heart.”

2. *Of justice towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves.*

“One of the most admirable virtues in the moral order is justice. It is among the moral virtues what

charity is among the theological virtues. Justice continues through time as it commences in time, and will endure for all eternity.

“Justice has many aspects. It consists in rendering to every one his due ; consequently, as there is diversity of duties, so will you find as many different species or aspects in justice. I will not speak to you of human or natural justice, but only of the supernatural virtue of justice.

“The virtue of justice is a supernatural inclination which leads a man to render to God, to his neighbour, and to himself that which is due to each.

“To God, My daughter, you owe the duties of religion which He has prescribed you, the observance of the commandments which He has given you. You owe Him gratitude for all the benefits He has lavished upon you ; in fine, if you have offended Him, you owe Him reparation and repentance : such are your duties towards God.

“I have already told you who is your neighbour. Now, among your neighbours I particularise your parents, your superiors, those who are above you in position, your equals, and your inferiors. To all you owe respect, love, and truthfulness : respect, for every one being God’s creature is deserving of your respect ; God has given you a commandment to love all men, and this commandment imposes upon you the obligation of speaking truth to all, in word, gesture, or writing. You ought to act towards all with simplicity, in such a way that in all your doings and in all your proceedings you may appear to every one what you really are.

“You owe your parents in particular a special love, because they are to you the representatives of God ;

you owe them obedience in everything which is not contrary to the law of God, you owe them a profound respect, you owe them a debt of gratitude for all you have received from them.

“You owe your superiors in particular, as you owe your parents, a special love, obedience, respect, and gratitude.

“You owe to those in particular who are in a higher position than your own, the respect and honour which are due to them on account of the rank they hold.

“You owe to your inferiors in particular the help and support which you are able to give them.

“To yourself, after fulfilling your duties towards God and your neighbour, you owe nothing but contempt and the desire of humiliation.

“Men sin against justice towards God by negligence, towards their neighbour by cupidity, and towards themselves by self-love. Fly negligence, and you will be exact in rendering all your duties to God; fly the desire of earthly goods and of personal gratifications, and you will discharge your duties towards your neighbour; fly self-love, My daughter, and you will also fulfil all your duties towards yourself.”

3. *Of fortitude and its effects.*

“The virtue of fortitude imparts to the soul the firmness necessary for maintaining or rejecting what reason or faith directs to be maintained or rejected.

“Fortitude is a virtue which puts to flight a culpable cowardice which would prevent the doing of good, and equally banishes a temerity which would urge to the undertaking of a work which reason condemns.

“Fortitude is to the soul like the trunk of a tree, which sustains the tree with its branches, its leaves, and its fruits ; fortitude sustains all the other virtues. Consequently, My daughter, if you do not wish to lose the virtue which God has communicated to your soul, you ought to preserve and endeavour to augment the virtue of fortitude within you. By it you will preserve the good that is within you ; by it you will perfect that good, and attract to it the good you do not already possess.

“For if you have the virtue of fortitude, you will fear neither perils nor death ; you will fear neither the trials, the afflictions, the sorrows, nor the miseries of life ; you will fear neither the attacks of the devil nor his temptations ; you will fear neither the assaults of the world nor those of your passions. You will combat generously all your enemies, not seeking your own glory but that of God.

“You will safely undertake all that God may inspire you to do and without fear of being deceived or of not attaining your object. You will regret nothing which you may give to God : neither youth, nor fortune, nor ease, nor prosperity ; you will give Him all, and repose in Him like a child on the knees of its mother.

“You will be patient and sustain without sinking under them the trials of life, neither being inwardly disturbed nor manifesting your trouble outwardly.

“You will endure prolonged sufferings, whether of body or of soul, sickness of body, aridities and dryness of soul. It is true you will sigh after your heavenly country, but you will patiently bide God’s time.

“You will persevere in good to the last moment of your life. You will do good and shun evil till death.

“You will be like a pillar of iron fixed on a rock in

the ocean. In vain would the waves and the winds beat against it; it remains immovable. So will it be with you, My daughter; you will be as firm as the mountain of Sion." *

4. *Of temperance; its objects: the touch, the movements of the soul and of the senses; senses; of shame; of the love of what is honourable: of abstinence, sobriety, continence, humility, gentleness, clemency, modesty, discretion, and economy.*

1. "Temperance is the fourth of the moral virtues. Temperance may be considered in a manner altogether general; in which case by temperance is understood any rules applied to the actions and practices of life. I wish to speak to you of the virtue of temperance, that is to say, of the rule which guides a man in the use of the things which most enthrall him and most easily separate him from good; to wit, the pleasure of eating and drinking and the gratification of the senses.

"The moral virtues are those which guide the heart of man according to the reason of things, in order to turn him away from evil and make him practise what is good in the use of creatures.

"Now among the things which are opposed to reason and would overbear it, there are none whose dominion is more powerful than the pleasures of the senses, which are all the more felt because they result from those acts which are more simply natural or more closely allied with nature; consequently, the pleasure will be greatest in acts which tend to the preservation of human nature. These acts may be considered in reference either to the preservation of the individual, which is effected by

* Comp. Psalm cxxiv. 1.

eating and drinking, or to that of the human race, which is effected by generation. These are the acts most natural to man, the acts in which he experiences the most pleasure, and consequently the acts which most tend to estrange him from God. It is, then, in regard to these acts that reason, which has been given to man in order to serve as his light and guide, ought to exercise itself in quite a special manner. It is the exercise of this reason and the rule by which it directs these acts which constitute the virtue of temperance.

“By the virtue of temperance which God gives him, man exercises a firm and just control over the pleasures of taste and touch, in order to live after a reasonable manner and conformably with the designs of God in his regard.

“In a virtue three things are to be distinguished : that which is necessary to its existence, the objects with which it deals, and the effects which it produces.

“Now, two things are essential to the virtue of temperance : to wit, the sense of shame, which makes a man shrink from the turpitude of every act contrary to temperance, and the love of what is honourable,* or that sentiment which makes him love the inherent beauty of temperance ; from among all the virtues temperance specially claims that honour which springs from the practice of virtue, and intemperance specially incurs that disgrace which vice entails.

“The virtue of temperance has for its principal object the touch, of which it regulates the use. It is temperance which regulates the sensation of

* The word employed is *honnêteté* ; but as the English language contains no term which is exactly equivalent, the translator has rendered it in accordance with the definition given above.

pleasure experienced in the touch. This is why every virtue that tends to curb, moderate, or correct any inclination whatever towards evil is a part of the virtue of temperance. Now, virtues produce this effect in three ways: by influencing the interior movements of the heart, curbing the exterior movements and acts of the body, or noting the real value of the things of this life.

“Besides the sensations of touch, temperance also regulates the movements of the soul which attract it towards anything, an attraction which is the interior touch of the soul.

“The first movement is that of the will, stirred by the impetuosity of passion; it is controlled by continence, which causes a man, on experiencing the assaults of concupiscence, so far from being overcome by it, to resist it and command it as its master.

“The second is that which is produced by a false hope and a culpable confidence; it is overcome by humility, which expects nothing, claims nothing, and believes that of itself it is capable of nothing.

“The third is that of anger, which prompts to vengeance; it is repressed by gentleness and clemency.

“Temperance also regulates the movements of the body as regards itself by modesty and the governance of the tongue, by reserve and silence; in fine, it regulates the movements of the body in regard to created things by discretion, poverty, and economy.

2. “My daughter, I have already spoken to you of purity, chastity, virginity, and poverty. I will now speak to you of shame, the love of what is honourable, abstinence, sobriety, continence, humility, gentleness, clemency, modesty, silence, discretion, and economy.

“I have told you, My daughter, that the sentiments

of shame and the love of what is honourable are two sentiments or two inclinations of the soul which are necessary to the virtue of temperance.

“Shame is the fear of incurring dishonour by the commission of a bad act. There are four kinds of shame: that which is felt for the evil which has been committed, that which is felt for the evil which is being committed, that which leads to the avoidance of evil, and that which prevents the doing of good.

“The feeling of shame which prevents the doing of good is culpable, bad, it is human respect; never fear to do what is good, never be ashamed of it, fear only evil.

“The shame which is felt for the evil which is being committed is bad if it issues in nothing more than shunning the observation of others, and does not lead to the avoidance of sin.

“The shame which is felt for the evil which has been committed is good if it tends to the avoidance of evil; it is fruitless if it does not lead to the avoidance of sin.

“The sense of shame which not only prevents a man from committing sin, but also makes him fly from it and have a horror of it, is good, and belongs to the virtue of prudence.

“This sense of shame does not merit the name of virtue in its true signification, because the word virtue implies a certain degree of perfection. Now, in the sense of shame there is no perfection, there is only a tendency to fly from evil.

“Thus sense of shame is not found either in those who are hardened in vice or in the perfect. The one do nothing but what is good; the others, far from dreading the doing of evil, live habitually in sin.

“It is not found in infants, because it supposes the passing of judgment, and they have not come to the use of reason, and are therefore unable to form any judgment.

“The sense of shame is found in the imperfect who aspire after perfection ; it is so much the stronger and has so much the greater dominion over men in proportion as the vice or the sin is greater, and they find themselves in the company of upright and virtuous persons, or of those who see them oftenest and are best capable of discerning their faults.

“In order that this sense of shame may not be injurious but profitable, it is necessary one while to avoid and despise it, and at another to moderate or excite it. Shame must be shunned and avoided in regard to everything that is good. If you are ashamed of Me, My daughter, during life I shall be ashamed of you at the end of time. Shame must be disregarded in conditions and states in which there are no reasons for being ashamed and no fear of dishonour, as in poverty and misfortune.

“A man must moderate the shame he feels for the sins he has been guilty of, in order that it may not prevent him from making an avowal of them to the minister who is charged with the office of forgiving them.

“He must excite the feeling of shame in himself when he is violently tempted and runs the risk of falling into sin. That is the moment for considering the blackness of the offence against God, and the disgrace with which such a fault would cover him, because the effect of this consideration is to make him avoid sin.

“The sense of shame is essential to the virtue of

temperance; the second sentiment necessary to this virtue is the love of what is honourable.

3. "The love of what is honourable is that sentiment of the soul which makes it love the inherent beauty of virtue or of temperance. It consists in the judgment which is passed on the excellence of an act which is performed, and as every good act is beautiful, and every beautiful act is worthy of honour, the man who has the love of what is honourable judges of the goodness and beauty of that act, and of the honour which belongs to it.

"He possesses the love of what is honourable who performs a good act dictated by the interior judgment of the soul. Thus it has its source and its principle in the interior, but it expresses itself exteriorly by the performance of this act, and it is the good act performed which enables a man to judge of the presence of this virtuous sentiment in any one. So long as the act is not performed it is not possible to judge whether he who is the object of observation possesses this virtuous sentiment, or to render to him the honour he deserves.

"Now, as temperance is the very virtue which inclines a man to do good and eschew evil, you will understand, My daughter, that the love of what is honourable must necessarily precede temperance and abide constantly with it.

4. "Abstinence is a virtue by which moderation is practised in the matter of eating and drinking, and in the gratification of the palate.

"Thus abstinence does not consist in abstaining entirely from food, which would be destructive both to health and to life, but in taking the quantity which simply suffices, so as not to excite too much the disorderly movements of nature, and even in foregoing

a slight portion of that quantity in order to repress any such movements.

"I gave you an example of abstinence in the use which I made, while on earth, of the commonest food, and in the fast I endured in the desert. Follow my example, and practise abstinence in the way I have shown you; it will produce the happiest effects both in your soul and in your body.

"It will dispose your soul to pray with greater fervour. He who does not practise abstinence feels in his soul the burden of his body overloaded with food, which takes away from him all vigour of mind and deprives him, in consequence, of all aptitude for prayer.

"It will strengthen your memory, and render it more capable of recalling all the benefits which God has lavished upon you and which you owe to Him. He who does not practise abstinence is always in a sort of torpor, which impedes the development or the use of his faculties and binds him down to intellectual inaction. Your own experience, My daughter, will make you understand this. When you rise in the morning you find yourself better disposed and more fit for prayer, your mind turns itself more naturally towards Me; it is more impressed by the words I address to you in the morning than in the daytime, and this is why I have preferred discoursing with you and speaking to you in the morning, whether it be in your chamber at the hour at which you make your prayer, or more especially in the holy place near My Tabernacle.

"Abstinence also develops the intellect. The intellect does not find itself impeded in its flight by the weight of sensible things, by the gross matter which environs and enshrouds it like a cloud. It is in

the morning also that you have a clearer understanding of the words I speak to you and comprehend more readily the reason of things.

“Since abstinence is so profitable, practise it, My daughter ; it will be serviceable not only to your soul, but also to your body.

“Abstinence converts the body into the temple of God. ‘The temple of God is holy,’ says the Apostle,* and this temple is man. Now, abstinence is a dedication of the body to God. By abstaining do you not seem, in fact, to be unwilling to introduce anything into it which is superfluous ? Besides, the body is the instrument of the soul ; the soul by means of the body performs works of virtue and avoids sin ; it avoids sin when it has the strength to resist, when it is not soft and effeminate ; it does what is good, it performs good works, because it has the necessary vigour, and the food it has taken does not bind it down and keep it attached to matter. Abstinence, then, is like a gate which is closed to evil and open to virtue ; it is that which makes the body holy and renders it truly the temple of God.

“Abstinence is that which seasons the food of man and preserves him in health. He who practises abstinence eats only what is necessary to him ; whatever be the food which is offered to him, he accepts it and is satisfied with it ; and this food supports him, it strengthens him, without injuring his health.

“In fine, abstinence is that which sustains the relations of life. The man who does not practise it cannot live in the society of his equals ; he is despised and derided by all. The man who does not practise

* 1 Cor. iii. 17.

abstinence is scarcely able to support himself owing to the excess of food in which he indulges.

“Practise abstinence, My daughter, it conduces to the interests of your body as much as to those of your soul ; it will preserve the health of your soul and that of your body. Practise it from this time forth ; it is the first condition of your practising it all your life. Do not seek after dainty and nicely cooked meats. Never eat as much as your appetite would allow. Do not eat with avidity. Do not be thinking of the food that is given you, and desiring something more delicate.

5. “Sobriety is in the use of wine what abstinence is in the use of food. It is a virtue by which moderation is practised in the matter of drinking and the pleasure associated with it.

“It is a moral virtue, belonging to the virtue of temperance. It is a moral virtue, for the object of the moral virtues is to preserve and defend right reason against everything which could attack and pervert it. Consequently, wherever there is a rock which reason might encounter, there must a virtue be found to ward off the danger. Now, the use of wine, when it is immoderate, causes the loss of reason. There is need therefore of a rampart against this vice ; you will find it in sobriety, which supplies the rule as to the use which ought to be made of wine, which God has given to man to quench his thirst and repair his strength, not to make him lose his reason.

“Sobriety produces four principal effects : it preserves and sustains the light of the intellect, for moderation in the use of wine invigorates the heart, whence proceed all the natural and vital acts of man ; it expands the powers of the mind by stimulating it

gently and with measure ; it preserves the brain in all its clearness ; in fine, it exhilarates all the faculties of the soul, and particularly that which lays hold on truth, to perfect all its works and give them firmness. This is why, as you have seen, in the Sacred Books sobriety is called the health of the body and of the soul. It is easy to understand how sobriety disposes the intellect to seize on whatever is most delicate and subtle, because sobriety sustains the perfect order of a man's being, and he is never more capable of acting either intellectually or materially than when he finds himself in this well-balanced state.

“ Sobriety represses the concupiscence of the flesh. Wine, in fact, My daughter, excites the whole organism of man ; it increases his propensity to evil, and leads by natural consequence to the vice of impurity. This is why God enjoined* the Nazarites not to drink wine or any intoxicating liquor. You have a proof of this effect in Noe, who, being made drunk with wine, lay uncovered in his tent,† and in St. John Baptist, whom sobriety, or rather entire absence from wine,‡ preserved in a state of such perfect purity.

“ Sobriety is the guardian of peace among men. Peace disappears from among them when they lose their reason, or their intellect is clouded, or their minds are over-excited. Now, sobriety preserves reason, prevents it from being clouded, and keeps the mind or faculties of man free from over-excitement. Sobriety therefore is the preserver of peace and of good harmony amongst men.

“ Sobriety is not complete abstention from wine ; it

* Numbers vi. 3.

† Genesis ix. 21.

‡ St. Luke i. 15.

is the rule by which its use is limited. It is applicable to all the world. In the first place, it is needful for the ministers of My altar, and, in the next place, for princes and magistrates, that they may be always capable of acting conformably to the mission entrusted to them. It is most suitable for religious, that they may be able to give themselves to the works of piety which their duty imposes on them, that they may mortify their flesh, and exercise themselves with facility in the practice of every virtue. Particularly is it becoming in the young and in women : in the young, in order not to augment their natural propensity to evil ; and in women, that they may preserve intact the dignity of their sex.

6. "Continnence, My daughter, is a virtue which supplies strength to resist every passion. Continence may be understood in three ways. In a broad and general sense it is the repression of those evil propensities which are connected with the touch and all the other senses. It is also taken to mean chastity in the marriage state. In fine, continence is the actual repression of the disorderly movements of concupiscence experienced in the soul.

"But in whatever way you may understand it, continence fortifies reason and duty against the passions that they may not impel to evil.

"This ought to show you the immense advantages to be reaped from continence during life, which is so short, and only a time of probation to you. From what evils, what troubles, what regrets, what miseries, does not continence preserve ! Continence, in fact, prolongs the life of time and secures that of eternity. Continence bestows liberty, and saves a man from the slavery of the senses, and of the passions. Continence

keeps him in mind of the four last things, and makes him adopt the means for attaining to supreme felicity. Such is the happy effect of continence; it gives a tranquil and peaceful life, a life which is honourable and is honoured by men, by angels, and by God; it secures eternal happiness in Heaven.

7. "Humility is also a virtue which appertains to the virtue of temperance, for it leads a man not to exalt himself above what he is. It is a virtue by which, in accordance with his intimate knowledge of the Majesty of God and his own nothingness, he despises himself and loves to see himself despised by others. Humility does not consist solely in the knowledge of God, or of self, but in the repression of the movement which inclines a man to exalt himself above himself. The knowledge of God and of self is the source of that repression which constitutes humility.

"Now, he who represses this disorderly movement in himself is truly humble, because he knows himself, and if he finds any good in himself he acknowledges that it does not come from himself but is the gift of God's mercy. He is truly humble, because he despises himself, and knows well that he is unworthy of the goods which God has bestowed upon him, and of those which He wills further to grant to him.

"He is truly humble, because, so far from desiring esteem or praise, he seeks only contempt, and refers to God all the favours which come to him through men, that they may return to Him who alone has deserved them.

"He is truly humble, because he believes himself to be the vilest of creatures, beholding what God has done for him and the little gratitude he has shown

Him in return, and because he looks only at what is good in others.

“He is truly humble, because he willingly makes himself the servant of all, chooses everywhere the lowest place and the meanest employments.

“He is truly humble, because he places himself before God as a slave who is submissive in all things to the will of his master, and as a poor sinner who is not worthy to appear before Him or to be endured in His presence.

“Now, nothing surpasses the virtue of humility; humility, in fact, is the first of virtues. It comes before faith, hope, and charity. It is their foundation. Does this surprise you, My daughter?” “Yes, Lord.” “Why so?” “Because I remember that you told me, when speaking of faith, that it is the foundation of all virtues. How, then, can the virtues have two foundations?” “My daughter,” replied the Saviour Jesus, “if your humility had been greater, you would not have felt any surprise at My words; you would have considered that I am the Truth, and therefore that My words are words of truth.”

I begged the Saviour Jesus to pardon me what I had done, and implored Him to continue instructing me; and I listened to Him with docility.

“Humility,” He said to me, “is the foundation of virtues, but in a different manner or under a different aspect from that in which faith is. You will easily understand this. The knowledge of a thing precedes the desire of it, and the desire precedes the use of means for acquiring it. Thus the theological virtues precede the moral virtues, because they consist in the knowledge, the desire, and the love of God, whereas the moral virtues are but the means for getting at

God. Now, faith is a theological virtue, and the first of the theological virtues in the order of existence ; it comes therefore before humility, which is a moral virtue, since it is associated with temperance, and in this relation faith is the foundation of all the virtues, even of humility itself.

“Under another aspect, on the contrary, humility is the foundation of all the virtues, and even of the virtue of faith. No one, in fact, will have faith if he does not begin by driving pride from his soul and installing humility therein, which makes him submit to the word and revelation of God. Humility, then, is the foundation of faith.

“Humility is also the foundation of hope. It is humility which says, ‘I am nothing but weakness, nothing but feebleness, but I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.’* For he who is humble knows himself, and, conscious that he can do nothing of himself, he places all his hope in God, and in this hope he cries, ‘I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.’ Thus humility does not reject or refuse great undertakings when God demands and expects them ; it refuses nothing, but rests all its hope in God.

“Again, humility is the foundation of charity. It is self-esteem which keeps the soul at a distance from God, it is self-contempt which brings it nigh to Him. He who esteems himself thinks only of himself : this is why he forgets God. He who despises himself thinks only of God, and this thought is not fruitless, for it produces love, and the firmer and more abiding this thought is, the more intense does the love of God become.

* Phil. iv. 13.

“Humility is therefore the foundation of the theological virtues. Behold, on the other hand, My daughter, how without humility faith wavers, without humility hope diminishes, without humility charity perishes. And what I say of the theological virtues I say also of the moral virtues. Without humility prudence is blind, justice fallacious, fortitude feeble, and temperance immoderate.

“Humility, My daughter, is also the loud voice of the soul, which rises from earth to Heaven and penetrates even to the throne of God. It is the most pleasing voice which resounds in the ears of God; it is the most powerful prayer which ascends to Him, and this is why it obtains for the soul the most signal favours of God. Mary was the humblest of creatures, and she became My Mother. Is there any favour comparable to that favour?

“Humility preserves from sin, sustains and fortifies its good; it teaches genuine wisdom, and at last confers true happiness by the participation of the vision of God.

“Love humility, therefore, O My daughter; seek to be forgotten and despised. Walk, after My example, in the way of humiliations; seek not to produce yourself, obliterate yourself in everything; never lift up your head, or your voice, or your heart—your head to lord it over another, your voice to assert yourself before any one, your heart to esteem yourself. Understand that everything you have you have received from God; therefore glory not therein. If I lavish My most signal favours upon you, merit them still more by your humility, and by acknowledging that there is nothing in you to make you worthy of such great testimonies of My friendship. Receive

without complaining or murmuring all the contempt of which you may be the object ; esteem yourself happy in being thus despised, derided or ill-regarded, and, in these sentiments of the most profound humility, stand always as a servant before God.

“ If you cherish these sentiments, My daughter, you will be always tranquil. What is there that can ever trouble you if you believe yourself to be a nothing, a nonentity ? What is there that can afflict you if you believe yourself to be deserving of all possible contempt ? Humility is tranquillity and peace, it is joy upon earth, and merits happiness in eternity.

8. “ Meekness and clemency are two virtues between which there is a great analogy ; they differ, however, one from the other. I have already told you, My daughter, that the interior passions are the springs of exterior acts or their restrainers. In like manner, the virtues which regulate the passions concur in producing the same effect as the virtues which regulate the actions, although in a different way. If you apply what I have said to meekness and clemency, you will understand the difference between them. Meekness and clemency concur in restraining anger, this is their common end, and therein these two virtues appear to resemble each other ; but they differ in their mode of operation.

“ Anger prompts to the avenging of an offence and the inflicting of severe punishment. Meekness is a power which restrains anger, and consequently prevents the infliction of all punishment. Clemency, on the contrary, leads to the diminution of the merited chastisement or punishment, which anger would have augmented. These two virtues tend therefore to regulate anger ; meekness by extinguishing it, clemency

by diminishing the vengeance to which anger prompted ; meekness by combating anger, clemency by combating the act which is the effect of anger.

“My daughter, it is with reason that meekness has been compared to milk and honey. There is nothing, in fact, sweeter in life than association with those who possess meekness. It is a delicious perfume the fragrance of which spreading over the whole earth ravishes all hearts. It is like that sweet ointment which flowed down upon Aaron’s robe ;* it is thus, indeed, that it pervades all the actions of him who possesses it. It is so lovable that it insinuates itself and penetrates into the souls of those you approach, and that as much by your air and your manners as by your words. It is the faithful companion of humility. Every humble person is at the same time meek, but a person who is meek may very possibly not be humble ; in this case, however, he does not possess the genuine virtue of meekness. He has a natural sweetness, or, as you are in the habit of saying, he has a sweet disposition, or it may be a studied, premeditated sweetness, a sweetness which does not on all occasions appear either in his behaviour or in his words.

What a difference between one who has meekness and another who has not this virtue. When a man has it, he is courteous, considerate, amiable, patient, never seeking to displease in anything ; he always shows the same evenness in his behaviour as in his words ; his countenance is always tranquil and serene ; he is self-possessed even amid the wrongs or insults he meets with, he forgets the evil and forgives it ; he does good to his greatest enemies. He imitates Me in

* Psalm cxxxii. 2, 3.

My conduct, and at the last day he will hear those words : ‘ Because thou hast been meek and humble of heart, come, good servant, and possess the promised land, that is Heaven.’

“ A person who is devoid of meekness is, on the contrary, rough, cold, hard, irascible ; he repels all hearts from him.

“ Exercise yourself, My daughter, in the virtue of meekness. It is becoming in all, but particularly in superiors whoever they may be, in order that they may win the confidence and affection of inferiors. It is becoming especially in priests, because of their intimate relations with the consciences of the faithful. It is peculiarly suitable to yourself, in order to your edifying others, giving good example, and advancing more and more in perfection. Beg God to bestow upon you this beautiful virtue of meekness.

9. “ Clemency is a virtue which prompts to the remission of a merited punishment or a portion of it. Clemency is therefore a moral virtue, for it subjects the movement of the heart to reason. In remitting a punishment or a portion of it, what, in fact, does clemency do but examine when and why forgiveness ought to be extended, or less punishment awarded, and also consider whether there be sufficient motive for inflicting punishment ? Severity is the rigorous application of the law. Clemency diminishes the punishment which would be due according to the letter of the law, because he who applies it has regard rather to the intention of the legislator than to the law which he enacted. Clemency also moderates the movement of the heart in favour of a merciful abatement of rigour.

“ Clemency ought to be the great virtue of princes,

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prelates, magistrates, and superiors. They ought to call to mind the clemency of God and of His Son to men, and not punish to the full extent of their powers. Clemency heals more ills than does severity. The passions are aroused by severity and appeased by clemency, which frequently obtains what severity never would have accomplished. Nothing is more calculated to excite clemency in you than the consideration of human frailty and of our own frailty. How many faults, too, are committed through carelessness or ignorance! They ought, therefore, not to be punished according to the rigour of the law.

“Practise clemency, My daughter; that is to say, remit all the penalties which those who have offended you might deserve. Do not seek to have them punished. Forgive them generously; treat them as brethren and friends. Do them a service if you can; show them that you have forgotten everything, and that you harbour in your mind no recollection of the injuries they have done you.

10. “My daughter, temperance regulates the interior movements of the soul by continence, humility, meekness, and prudence; but it regulates also the personal and exterior movements of the body by modesty and silence.

“Modesty is a virtue which regulates the movements of the body, controls the senses, dictates the manner in which recreation ought to be taken, and presides at the exterior arrangement of the dress, according to a person’s condition in life.

“You will understand that the movements of the body, the senses, amusements, recreation, and the very dress that is worn, are all capable of being

submitted to a rule prescribed by reason ; consequently, modesty is a moral virtue.

“It will teach you how to regulate the movements of the body ; not to walk either hurriedly or languidly ; not to throw your arms about in an unbecoming manner ; not to loll self-indulgently ; but to hold yourself always, even when alone, as though you were in the presence of persons of distinction or deserving of your respect.

“Modesty will teach you not to be perpetually turning your head this way and that way, but to move it quietly when there is reason for doing so, keeping it habitually a little bent forward, without inclining too much either to the right or to the left.

“Modesty will teach you, above all, not to keep turning your eyes on this side and on that, and not to stare at everything ; it will teach you to look at people, not with anger, but with kindness ; not with pride, but with humility ; not with freedom, but with chastity and shamefacedness ; it will teach you, when conversing with any one, not to look at him fixedly and with a cold countenance, but with sweetness, not looking into his eyes, but directing your own a little below them, as though you were regarding rather the interior of his soul than his exterior aspect.

“It will teach you to let your face wear an expression of gentleness and kindness, without knitting your brow or pursing your lips ; not to preserve a moody silence, but to address a few words to those about you, such as circumstances may suggest, and characterised always with true dignity, no less than with frankness and sincerity.

“It will teach you to take such diversions as are suitable to your age, condition, and sex, for the

recreation and refreshment of your mind and to prevent its being always on the stretch. It will teach you never to remain alone with a man, and avoid in your recreations everything which could offend against propriety or civility. It will teach you not to give your mind its fill of satisfaction, or indulge it in too much amusement, as also to take your recreation only in suitable places and at suitable times.

“It will teach you to dress in a proper manner, conformably with your position, not desiring expensive clothing or affecting such elegance of attire as favours ill-regulated movements of the passions. It will teach you, on the contrary, to be always simple, neat, and clean in your dress.

“It will teach you the same simplicity in the arrangement of your house, in its furniture, and the food which is served at your table.

“This, My daughter, is the first virtue which regulates the exterior movements of the body; the second is silence.

11. “Silence, My daughter, may be understood in two ways: either as the act of abstention from talking, or as the inclination to reserve and moderation in speaking. To distinguish the two, I will call the act of abstention from talking silence, and the inclination or power by which the propensity to talk is moderated the love of silence.

“The love of silence is a virtue which has a double object. The first is to forbid the tongue all unlawful speech, as detraction, calumny, lying, perjury, and every immodest, impure, idle, and useless word. The second is to forbid the tongue even useful and allowable words when there is no necessity to speak.

“You will discern in yourself the love of silence if

you never give utterance to unseasonable words, if you speak only where it is allowable to speak, that is to say, outside the holy place; if, with a view to recollection, or repairing the powers of your mind, you abstain during a certain time in the day from speaking and conversing; if you abstain not only from the language of the tongue but also from the interior discourse of your mind, by restraining your imagination; if you never talk for your own gratification, or from a motive of self-love, but always out of charity and for the greater glory of God.

“My daughter, I recommend to you the love of silence. Follow the example I gave you when I was on earth. I am the Eternal Word of God the Father, and I remained for the first thirty years of My life without manifesting Myself except on one sole occasion in the Temple at Jerusalem. I am the Eternal Word of God, and I abide in silence in the Sacrament of the Altar, speaking to men only by the voice of My grace and of My love.

“Keep silence, and you will have peace with God, with your neighbour, and with yourself. Keep silence, and you will make rapid progress in perfection, for you will avoid numerous occasions of sin; you will excite neither your own passions nor those of others, and you will be better able to detect the snares which the enemy of your salvation will set for you.

12. “Discretion is a moral virtue which regulates the gift of science or knowledge. It is the opposite of curiosity.

“There is a knowledge which is profitable, there are other kinds of knowledge which are dangerous, and also culpable; others, again, which can serve no good purpose and are consequently unprofitable.

Discretion teaches how to discern those which are profitable and reject others as being bad or attracting to evil. It teaches also to repress an excessive desire even of useful knowledge, because knowledge puffeth up the heart and engenders pride.

“Discretion teaches how to distinguish what things are useful, and inclines to the study of them, on account of the advantage to be derived from the study whether for self or for others. Now, the highest science, the first necessary knowledge, is the science of God and of religion, the science and knowledge of salvation. After this come the secondary kinds of knowledge which facilitate the means of perfecting the science of salvation, as reading and writing, by which a man instructs himself, and retains what he has learnt by committing to paper in order thus to imprint it on the heart.

“Discretion teaches to reject that knowledge which is profitless for good, because such knowledge may very easily lead into evil; it teaches to reject dangerous knowledge, the knowledge of evil, because he who has a knowledge of evil may very easily commit it.

“Discretion teaches a man to repress the desire of knowing what concerns others; it also inclines him not to communicate what he has learnt, when there are sufficient motives for withholding such communications.

“Beg God to grant you discretion, My daughter, and, like your Saviour, you will advance in age, in wisdom, and in grace before God; you will learn to know God more and more, to attach yourself to Him more and more closely, and love Him alone.

13. “Economy is the last virtue which appertains

to the virtue of temperance. Economy is the virtue which regulates the suitable and necessary use of things. It has a threefold object : the soul, the body, and those material things which surround it.

“Economy regulates the forces of the soul by determining their employment, exercising those which are indispensable, and not employing others the use of which would be superfluous.

“Economy regulates the forces of the body, by determining the manner in which a man ought to work, the work he ought to do, and when and for how long he ought to do it.

“In fine, economy regulates the use of the exterior things which a man has at his disposal, so that he may employ them according to his needs, and not expend them in a useless way.

“Hence you see that economy is essentially a husbanding of the forces of the soul and body, as also of the goods of fortune. This husbanding of the forces of the soul tends to augment them, favouring its growth, and increase in virtue by the performance of what is good and conformable to truth, and applying all its forces, when necessary, to this performance and conformity.

“This husbanding of the powers of the body tends to augment them, so as to preserve to the soul which inhabits it its vigour and its strength, and permit the body to perform, in submission to the soul, the actions which are necessary to the natural and supernatural life.

“This husbanding of the goods of fortune tends to increase them, to the end that they may be employed according to the designs of God, may serve to assist the poor and suffering, and provide against those

unforeseen misfortunes which may happen. Thus, My daughter, economy belongs to temperance, and regulates all your actions according to due order and reason.

“ Beg God to grant you all these virtues, and when He bestows them upon you, endeavour to augment and increase them by a faithful correspondence with the inclination which they communicate to your soul.”

5. Of purity ; three kinds of purity ; the happiness of pure hearts.

I will now also relate what the Saviour Jesus said to me, on two different occasions, respecting purity and pure hearts. I was meditating one day on the Passion and was contemplating Him stripped of His garments by His executioners.

“ If you knew how much I suffered, My daughter, at that moment ! You will never comprehend it ; it is beyond the reach of your understanding. What confusion I underwent, when I saw Myself, in the presence of My Father, laden with all the infamies, all the turpitudes, all the sins of which men had rendered themselves and were to render themselves guilty—Me, the God of sanctity ! Ah ! God alone could appreciate the amount of shame and grief I experienced. Understand, at least a little, how I love purity and at what cost I desired to establish it on earth. The heavens are not a sufficiently pure abode for My sanctity, yet I come to dwell in your temples ; I descend upon your altars, and into your very heart. Pray God to purify you more and more, that you may be more and more worthy to receive Me. Never would you be pure or holy enough for Communion, if My love did not

supply the deficiency. O holy and lovely purity ! thou meritest the homage and the veneration of men, the esteem of angels, and the love of God. Like a sweet perfume thou ascendest up to heaven to return again to earth with the benediction of God.

“There are three kinds of purity, My daughter. The first consists in having no mortal sin upon the conscience ; the second, in freedom from venial sin and from attachment to such sin ; the third, in freedom, or the firm desire of being freed from all imperfection, in detachment from all created things and in perfect love.

“To be pure is to be free from every irregular attachment ; to be pure is to live only in God, with God, and for God ; to be pure is to renounce all pleasures, even the most legitimate, in order to have but one pleasure, the will of God ; and to live like this is to resemble the angels, and to be an angel in a mortal body. O My daughter, be ever striving after the most perfect purity by detaching yourself, not only from that which is evil, but from that which is permissible, in order to attach yourself to Me alone ; all else would sully your purity and your innocence. I will be to you what the sun is to the clearest crystal, penetrating it and enhancing its brilliancy.”

Some time after, Jesus also said to me, “Blessed are the hearts that are pure, for they shall see God. My daughter, there is a twofold vision of God : the vision of Him in His works, and then in Himself. Pure hearts have the first of these visions on earth ; they shall have both in eternity.

“God manifests Himself by His works and in His works. He who beholds them may and ought to say, ‘These are the works of God.’ There are two kinds

of works of which God is the author : the works of creation, and those of reparation and redemption.

“These two works are full of realities ; but all who have eyes to see do not see them ; all who have eyes to examine them are not able to discern their Author in them. For this, My daughter, it is necessary to have a pure heart, that is to say, a heart detached from sin, free from sin, a heart in which grace dwells, a heart in which the Divinity finds a habitation worthy of Itself, a heart into which It comes to abide and take Its repose, a heart adorned with the fairest virtues, a heart, not of marble and stone, but a feeling heart, an enlightened heart. He who has a heart thus formed has eyes to see, because God is his light, and by the brightness of that light he discerns the Name of God written in all His works. He looks up to the heavens, and says, ‘The heavens are the work of God ;’ he looks upon the earth, and says, ‘It is the work of God ;’ he beholds the day, and says, ‘It is the work of God ;’ the night, and says, ‘It is the work of God ;’ the ocean and the seas, and says, ‘They are the work of God.’ He who has a heart thus fashioned has eyes to see, because God is his light, and by the brightness of that light he discerns the Name of God in all the works of reparation and redemption. He contemplates My birth, and says, ‘This is the work of God ;’ My life, and says, ‘This is the work of God ;’ My Passion, My humiliation, My pains, My sufferings, My death, and says, ‘This is the work of God ;’ My Resurrection, and says, ‘This is the work of God.’ He contemplates My Cross, My Tabernacle, the Sacrament of My Love, all the sacraments, My Church, My religion, and says, ‘This is the work of God.’

“Thus, My daughter, is realised the truth of those

words : 'Blessed are the hearts that are pure, for they shall see God.' But hearts that are pure will not see God only through the veil of creation and as in an enigma of which they have found the solution, they will see Him face to face, such as He is in His glory in Heaven, as He is in Himself. They will see Him in that primary creation which is Heaven or the manifestation of Himself, and in this manifestation they will read the meaning of the manifestation which He made in time by the creation of the world, a manifestation which they were unable perfectly to apprehend at the time they beheld it with the eyes of the body, but which they will understand under all its aspects when they shall have quitted this world for ever. They will see Him in His life, in His nature, in His intimate relations with the angels, in His relations with the elect, in His relations with themselves, and this will constitute their happiness and their bliss. Yes, blessed are the hearts that are pure, for they shall see God.

"My daughter, purify your heart more and more ; detach it from yourself and from your own inclinations ; detach it from the world and from everything that is of the world ; detach it from Satan and his suggestions, that you may unite it most perfectly to your God. Be not discouraged, fight against your inclinations, bewail the misery of your nature, humble yourself profoundly, open your eyes to My light, your ears to My word, your soul to My grace, and your heart will become pure. Then will I dwell in your heart, I will manifest Myself to you, not only in the exterior creation, but in your own heart, I will dispose it as a habitation in which it will be My delight to dwell, I will entrust to you the key of it,

and there you shall find Me whenever you feel yourself attracted to come to Me. Then shall you have in this place of exile, this valley of tears, a foretaste of the realisation of My words: 'Blessed are the hearts that are pure, for they shall see God;' you will be blessed because you will see Me."

6. *Of the gifts of the Holy Spirit; the number and nature of these gifts; the distinction between them and the theological and moral virtues; their necessity.*

The Saviour Jesus spoke to me as follows concerning the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. I am not sure whether I shall be able to recall His precise words, but I will do the best I can.

"My daughter," He said, "I wish to instruct you in the gifts of the Holy Spirit which sanctifying grace communicates to the soul. They are seven in number: the gift of wisdom and of understanding, the gift of counsel and of fortitude, the gift of knowledge and of piety, and the gift of the fear of the Lord.

"The gifts of the Holy Spirit are habits or inclinations inherent in the soul, distinct from infused supernatural virtues, and necessary for performing what is good and obtaining salvation; they are inseparable also one from the other. I have arranged them in the order of their dignity. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are inferior in dignity to the theological virtues, but superior to the moral virtues.

"The gifts of the Holy Spirit are infused habits, that is to say, they are inherent in the soul. For by grace the Holy Spirit dwells in the soul and abides

therein with His gifts. This inherence is consequently nothing transitory, but a fixed reality abiding in the soul, an inclination, a habit, which disposes it to act according to the tendency of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

“Do you know how it is that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are distinct from the virtues? You will easily understand. The gifts of the Holy Spirit would be better called the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, because this word would indicate the very nature of these gifts; that is to say, they are in the soul like the breath of the Holy Spirit. Now, inspiration denotes a movement proceeding from without.*

“In man there are two sources of movement: an interior source, which is reason; an exterior source, which is God. Now, for movement, there must be a proportion between the object of the movement and its source, and the movement will be perfect if the mover knows well how to direct the movable disposition of the object he desires to put in motion. In like manner, the more considerable the source of the movement is, the more considerable also must the movable disposition of the object be. An eminent, learned, erudite master, whose teaching is of an exalted character, necessarily requires in his scholar an intelligence which rises to the height of his instruction. Human virtues perfect a man according as he is moved by reason to act interiorly or exteriorly.

* The doctrine of Marie Lataste, in this passage, is identical with that of St. Thomas, i. 2, Q. 68, A. 1. Whoever has endeavoured to fathom this difficult subject will not be surprised that the Angel of the School himself should not have succeeded in altogether dispersing the mysterious darkness with which it is surrounded.—*Note of Jesuit Examiners.*

But in order that he may be disposed to receive in himself the action of God, it is necessary that he should possess perfections or virtues of a more elevated kind. Now, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are these perfections and virtues which breathe upon the soul in order that it may receive the movement which God desires to give it. The gifts of the Holy Spirit raise a man to God, and dispose him to receive the movement which He desires to give.

“This is why the gifts of the Holy Spirit are inferior to the theological virtues. The theological virtues, in fact, attach the soul to God, whereas the gifts of the Holy Spirit do but direct and move it towards Him.

“This, again, is why they are superior to the moral virtues, because the moral virtues do but remove the obstacles which keep the soul from God, whereas the gifts of the Holy Spirit actually direct and move it towards Him.

“The gifts of the Holy Spirit are necessary for performing what is good and obtaining salvation.

“The works of a man are perfected in two ways : by the natural light, which is reason, and by the supernatural light communicated by the theological virtues. But this perfection is itself imperfect, since even with these virtues you do but know and love God imperfectly. Consequently, these virtues have need of a power different from themselves to urge them to act. The reason, being only imperfectly enlightened by the theological virtues, requires, in order to tend more surely towards the supernatural end, the inspiration and movement which are communicated to it by the Holy Spirit. They who are conducted by Him are truly sons of God, and will be

partakers of His inheritance, which no one can attain unless he be urged thereto by the breath of the Holy Spirit. In like manner, the removal of the obstacles which prevent the will of man from going to God is not sufficient. His will must also be urged towards God : this is the work which is effected by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“Consequently, the theological and moral virtues are not sufficient to man ; he needs also the gifts of the Holy Spirit to enable him to attain his last end.

“You understand, in fact, My daughter, that if the theological and moral virtues communicate to man manifold knowledge, and remove from him a thousand hindrances, they do not make him know everything and do not render everything possible to him. But God, who is almighty and knows all things, perfects in man the work of His grace by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“The theological and moral virtues are together seven in number, as also the gifts of the Holy Spirit which perfect the work of these virtues are reckoned to be seven in number.

“The theological and moral virtues all repose in the reason or in the will, because the reason and the will are the sole principles of action in man.

“The reason is speculative, that is to say, observant, or it is practical, that is to say, active. Now, in speculative reason, as in practical reason, you may consider the apprehension of good or of truth to be effected by the view of truth or of good and by the judgment you form of them.

“In the view of truth, the speculative reason is perfected by the gift of *understanding*, and the practical reason by the gift of *counsel*. In the

judgment of truth, the speculative reason is perfected by the gift of *wisdom*, and the practical reason by the gift of *knowledge*.

"If, after reason or understanding, you consider the will and the action of the virtues upon it, you will see that the virtues exercise the power of the will in relation to God, to self, and to the passions.

"Now, this power which the virtues develop is perfected in relation to God by the gift of *piety*, in relation to self by the gift of *fortitude*, and against the passions by the gift of the *fear of the Lord*.

"These gifts of the Holy Spirit are all imparted by sanctifying grace, and they repose on charity, which unites the soul to God. He who has charity possesses all the gifts of the Holy Spirit; but he who loses charity loses also the gifts of the Holy Spirit; that is to say, he no longer experiences the effect of the breath of the Holy Spirit urging him towards God."

This is as well as I can recollect what was said to me on this subject.

7. *Of the gifts of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, of fortitude, of knowledge, of piety, and of the fear of the Lord.*

Here is what the Saviour Jesus said to me respecting each of these gifts :—

"I will now speak to you," He said, "of each of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and teach you to value them by knowing them better.

"My daughter, there are three kinds of wisdom : Wisdom Increate, which is God ; Wisdom Incarnate, which is the Son of God made Man ; and human wisdom, or the wisdom of man.

“Wisdom Increate is God, the Three Divine Persons, inseparable One from the Other, who by Their wisdom created all things, govern all things, direct all things. The mind of man cannot comprehend this Infinite Wisdom, and the Apostle, when he was rapt even to the third heaven, having for a few instants had a sight of Its splendour, could say of It nothing but this : ‘O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!’* ”

“Wisdom Incarnate is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God made Man, who came to manifest Increate Wisdom externally by repairing the disorder caused by sin.

“Human wisdom is divided into two kinds : the wisdom which is according to the world, the flesh, and sin, and the wisdom which is according to God and came from God. The first is the wisdom of the wicked ; the second, that of the good.

“Wisdom is a habit of the soul which enables it to taste things and to judge them ; whence you see that the wisdom of the wicked is a habit of their soul which produces a depraved taste and a depraved judgment, whilst the wisdom of the good is a habit which produces a taste and a judgment perfect in all things.

“It is this wisdom of the good which is the first gift of the Holy Spirit. It is found in all those who have sanctifying grace ; it is found even in baptised infants, and in such baptised adults as have not the use of reason ; it exists in them as a habit, but not as wisdom in action, because these acts of wisdom are precluded in infants and in adults deprived of the use of reason on account of their natural deficiency.

* 2 Cor. xii. 2-4 ; Rom. xi. 33.

“The *wisdom* which is the gift of the Holy Spirit consists, in the case of all, in tasting and judging soundly what appertains to God and is in God, as being that which appertains to life, is of life and in life, in order to working out their salvation by doing all that God has prescribed for that end. Such is the wisdom common to those who are in the state of sanctifying grace.

“There is, however, a wisdom, the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is more exalted, and which certain souls receive in order to their higher elevation in the contemplation of divine mysteries, the knowledge of those mysteries, and the power of manifesting them to others, as also to their understanding better how to direct the actions of their life according to the will of God ; a knowledge the utility of which is not confined to themselves alone but extends also to others. This wisdom, however, is one of those graces which are gratuitous, and which, considered in themselves, do not concur in rendering those who have them more pleasing to God.

“The advantages of the gift of wisdom are immense. He who has this gift is chaste, peaceable, modest, confiding in the word of others ; he favours what is good, exercises mercy, and judges without dissimulation.

“For wisdom not only enables a man to contemplate God, it also regulates his actions. Now, the first effect of this regulation is to keep him far from sin ; consequently, the wise man is also a chaste man.

“He is peaceable ; for he who is wise experiences no disorderly and irregular movements, and everything in him is obedient to God and to reason ; now, peace is order, is tranquillity.

“He is modest ; for if a wise man avoids sin still more is he on his guard against all that might lead to sin.

“He is confiding ; he loves to receive counsel, to hearken to it, and to follow it. He favours what is good ; never putting obstacles in its way, but, on the contrary, striving to promote it as much as possible. He does what is good himself and works at it with earnestness. He is merciful ; for, seeing that man is made to the image of God, he pities his weakness and lends him aid and succour according to his ability. He judges without dissimulation ; that is to say, he does not fear to point out evil when he perceives it in order to expel it, and warn him who is doing it to abstain therefrom. And his wisdom will teach him how to give this warning in appropriate terms and at an opportune season in order not to increase the evil but to cure it completely.

“Such is the first gift of the Holy Spirit. It directly affects the intelligent power of man, as do also the three following gifts : the gift of *understanding*, the gift of *knowledge*, and the gift of *counsel*, of which I am about to speak to you. But, to make you better comprehend the nature of these gifts, I wish to show you how they differ from each other, and the part they are designed to perform.

“These four gifts appertain to the supernatural knowledge of man, which is founded on faith. Now, the immediate and direct object of faith is Primary Truth, which is God ; then certain principal facts in the order of creation : the Incarnation and the Humanity of the Saviour, the redemption of man, his justification by grace, the creation and government of the world, and finally, the direction of the

actions of man, a direction based on rules given by God.

“Whence you see, My daughter, that two things are necessary on your part in regard to the object of faith: first, that in order to have faith your mind should penetrate this object of your belief, and this you do by the gift of *understanding*, which imparts to you a certitude, not of demonstration, but of conviction so efficacious that you clearly see that you ought to give it the adhesion of your faith. You must also pass a right judgment in regard to the object of your faith, in such manner that you should understand the necessity of attaching yourself to this object, and keep far from those which are opposed to it. Now, this right judgment is formed in regard to what concerns God by the gift of *wisdom*, and in regard to that which concerns the creature by the gift of *knowledge*. But this is not sufficient: you have need to receive also the gift of *counsel* for the particular application of each of your actions.

“You will now better understand, My daughter, My explanations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“The natural light which enables a man to direct his actions and to rule them is not sufficient for him, because he is designed for a supernatural end. Now, to attain this end, this supernatural good, he has need of a supernatural light, which may enable him to discern this end and this good. It is communicated to him by the gift of *understanding*.

“The word understanding has several significations: it signifies the nature of the soul; it signifies the faculty of the soul as opposed to the will; it signifies also a disposition to perceive first principles, in so far as they ought to be denied or affirmed: for example,

that it is necessary to love God and not to love evil ; finally, it signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit.

“Considered in itself, the word understanding signifies the intimate knowledge of a thing. The gift of supernatural understanding is the gift of the intimate knowledge of that which is in God, and of the actions to be performed in relation to God and for God.

“The gift of *understanding* is not a gift of purely speculative understanding ; it is also a gift of practical understanding ; for, this gift having relation to faith, it must be, like faith, both speculative and practical. Now, the gift of understanding has relation, not only to that which belongs immediately to the domain of faith, but also to everything which is associated with faith ; consequently, good works are closely associated with it, because they vivify it ; since, for the performance of those works, there is necessarily required the gift of understanding, which regulates and disposes them.

“The gift of understanding is found in all those who have sanctifying grace, for sanctifying grace directs the will towards good, and the will cannot be directed towards good if it does not know it. Sometimes, however, it is withdrawn from those who are in the state of grace ; although they retain it so far as is necessary for their performing what is good, and maintaining themselves therein and in the way of salvation. They are deprived of it in order to prevent their penetrating too deeply into the secret things of God and the sublime truths of faith. Such an exaltation of their intelligence might inflate them with pride, and God withdraws from them the understanding by which they might be elevated to a degree which would cause their ruin and destruction.

“It is thus, My daughter, that everything is disposed for the good of souls which have the grace of God and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“The gift of *knowledge* is the gift which enables you to know all that there is in the order of creation, and of the duties you ought to fulfil in view of this order, that you may attain your supernatural end. Consequently, this gift teaches you the road you ought to take, and the dangers you ought to avoid ; the use you ought to make of creatures ; the manner in which you ought to use them, or the distance you ought to put between them and you. The gift of knowledge, therefore, is a gift which necessarily tends to action.

“The gift of *counsel* is a supernatural gift which directs, regulates, and guides the acts of the soul which has the knowledge of its duties. This direction and guidance does not come by reasoning, but by the counsel or inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This gift of counsel, then, enables a man to avoid evil in his actions and always to do what is good ; it guides him in all those acts which tend to eternal life, in all that is, as well as in all that is not, of necessity to salvation.

“It is easy for you to understand, My daughter, what perfection the soul acquires by this gift ; for by it the soul possesses the very rectitude of God or of the Holy Spirit, who directs all things on earth and in heaven.

“These four gifts of the Holy Spirit, My daughter, have relation to the intelligence ; the others, to the will of man.

“The gift of *fortitude* is implanted in the soul by the Holy Spirit, in order to make it bear up vigorously against all the adversities of life, be their nature what

it may, to render it strong to endure them, and prevent it from sinking under their weight.

“This gift of fortitude makes itself felt in the soul by three effects : the first leads it to encounter and avert the difficulties of life ; the second inclines it to endure everything without offering any resistance ; and the third, to continue this perfect endurance, not only for a day, but for many years, and even unto death.

“Now, you ought to observe, My daughter, that the gift of fortitude does not prevent the body from suffering in the tribulations or pains which it experiences, but its effect is that, despite the sufferings of the body, the soul nevertheless is able to rejoice and be full of joy, for the sake of that which is to follow its suffering and trials.

“You ought also to remark, My daughter, that the gift of fortitude is not intended to make the soul which has received it declare that what the body endures is not an evil, is not pain and suffering ; it is sufficient that the soul in which this gift operates should not yield itself to such an excess of sorrow as to abandon the way of goodness and truth.

“Finally, you ought to observe that the grace of God sometimes makes itself felt to such a degree that the soul forgets all the sufferings of its body, so as to experience nothing but complete and perfect satisfaction, causing it to exclaim that it overflows with joy in the midst of all its tribulations.

“*Piety*, My daughter, is a gift of the Holy Spirit which inclines you to render to God, with ardour and love, the worship, interior and exterior, which is due to Him, and to submit in all things to His will.

“Piety is a gift of the present life and also of that which is to come.

“The gift of piety will lead you to honour God, to do Him homage, because He is your Creator, your Sovereign Master, your God, your Redeemer, and in all these titles merits your whole homage, interior and exterior. It will lead you to submit to all the laws and practices of religion which you ought to observe. It will lead you to love God, and to give yourself wholly to Him. It will lead you to show veneration to the Saints, because they are the glorified temples of God ; and specially to pay due honour to your family, and show yourself always humble and submissive. It will lead you to assist the poor in the necessities of the body, as well as those of the soul, because it will make you see My image in them. It will lead you to walk ever among the wicked without scandalising them by your conduct, and to live in their midst in the constant practice of goodness and virtue.

“I have said, My daughter, that piety will abide with you in Heaven ; and, in fact, you will retain that gift there, but not in such wise as you have it on earth ; you will retain it so that you may remain ever attached and united to God.

“My daughter, there are many kinds of fear. There is the fear of the sinner, an excessive fear, which makes him fall into despair at the sight of the justice of God and His judgment : this fear is bad.

“There is the fear also of those who dread the vengeance of God, and on that account observe His law, not daring to commit sin because of the punishment which would follow. His law is to them a heavy burden ; love alone can render that burden sweet and light.

“There is another kind of fear, the fear of servants. They faithfully observe the whole law, they regard,

fear, and love God as their Master. They fear to displease Him on account of the punishment they would incur and the loss of their reward. They love Him, no doubt, for Himself, but they love Him principally for the sake of their own interests.

“The best fear is that of the children of God. These regard, love, and fear God as their father. They do not think either of punishment or reward, and the only motive of their actions is the will of their Father who reigns in Heaven. This will is the only law which they recognise, and they submit to this will in order to be pleasing to God, and for love of Him, because of His infinite perfection and the benefits He has lavished upon them. Not knowing how to testify their gratitude to Him, they offer to Him all their actions and all that they possess. Desiring to love Him, with the greatest possible perfection, and seeing that there is nothing on earth but imperfection and the danger of displeasing Him, they sigh after Heaven, not that they may be more happy or be delivered from the troubles of life, but that they may no longer offend God, and may love Him perfectly. They are virtuous, not because of the reward they look for, but to please God ; and, after having served him faithfully all their lives, they would be content to be condemned to the flames of hell so only that they might be able even there to love Him. If in a moment of weakness they fall into sin, so far from being disheartened and growing cold in their love of God, they rise again with courage and with a firm resolution to sin no more ; they go and cast themselves into the paternal arms of the Lord, they beg His forgiveness, and promise henceforth to love Him more, and do His will more faithfully in everything. If they beg a favour of Him they ask

for it as a child would ask it of his father. Ah, My daughter, how few in number are those who act in this wise !

“It is the Holy Spirit who bestows this filial fear upon a soul. They who have this fear are led by the Holy Spirit, and all their actions are the actions of the true children of God.

“What I have now said to you, My daughter, of the different gifts of the Holy Spirit will make you sufficiently understand their importance, necessity, and immense advantages. The Holy Spirit gave them to you in all their plenitude on the day of your Confirmation. Put no obstacle, My daughter, to the efficacious action of these gifts. Allow yourself to be led by the Holy Spirit ; He is the Spirit of Truth, He will sustain you in truth, He will attach you to truth, and by Him you will be united to God, and in God will find felicity.”

Everlasting love and thanksgiving be to Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Amen.

BOOK X.

OF SIN.

Glory and praise, love and thanksgiving, be rendered unceasingly to Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

1. *Of the sinful soul, the tepid soul, and the virtuous soul.*

THE Saviour Jesus spoke to me of three kinds of persons living in the world, and of what awaits them in the other life. He spoke to me first of those who live and die in mortal sin; next of those who, although in the state of grace, live in imperfection, doing little or nothing to reform themselves, and die in that state; finally, of those who, having perfection and sanctity always before their eyes, direct all their efforts to acquire it and die full of virtues and merits.

“Look at that man,” He said to me; “before him are God and Satan. Satan holds out temptation to him, in order to draw him into sin; God offers him His grace that he may resist temptation and avoid sin. What does that man do? He turns away his eyes from God and from His grace, he gives the preference

to Satan, and commits sin. Nevertheless, God recalls him to Himself, either by the good examples which He puts before him, or by the exhortations of His ministers, or by fresh inspirations of His grace. Nothing has any effect upon that man, who is engrossed with outward things, immersed in blindness and insensibility; he is indifferent about the matter of his salvation. Now comes the hour of death. His soul, freed from its bonds, flies towards God, from whom it came. But God rejects it, and then that soul knows the greatness of the loss it has sustained. So long as man is on earth he does not understand the value of the possession of God, but after death the full light bursts upon him, and the soul clearly sees that, having come forth from God, it was created that it might return to Him, be united to Him, and find in Him its happiness and its end. Nor is there a greater torment, or a separation more fraught with sorrow and despair, than that of a soul rejected by God and separated from Him for all eternity. That guilty soul has heard its judgment of reprobation: behold it at the gates of hell, which it must enter never to come out again. At the sight of that frightful spectacle, that abyss of woe, that multitude of the damned, terrified and despairing, fain would it flee away, but at the voice of God the abyss opens wide its mouth. What is the despair of that soul separated eternally from God! It is then that it understands its folly in having chosen what it has chosen and lost what it has lost. Its memory, like a gnawing worm, torments it eternally, recalling to it the means of salvation which God had given it. Its will, eternally thwarted, will have what it would not have. Listen to the cry of the proud man: 'Wretch that I am, I sought only glory and grandeur,

and lo, I am plunged for ever in shame and confusion on account of my folly!’ Listen to the cry of the avaricious man: ‘Wretch that I am, I sought only the world’s goods, and they have been the cause of my losing all; they have plunged me into most dreadful misery and torments!’ Listen to the cries of all these sinners: what reproaches, what lamentations, what groanings, what blasphemies are here! God reigns even in hell, and His presence forms the greatest torment of the damned.”

Here is what the Saviour Jesus said to me of the state of a soul in grace, but imperfect, and not striving to diminish its imperfections: “Look,” He said, “at that person: he is united to God, but how easily he forgets Him to gratify himself in everything and take his own pleasure. Instead of thinking of God, and referring everything to Him, he loves praise and honour; he delights in being loved, honoured, and esteemed, takes little note of this complacency of his, and does nothing to correct himself of his self-love, on the plea that it does not cause him to lose the friendship of God. True, but God does not favour him with such intimate communications and does not grant him as many graces as He would if he would purify his heart from all its affections to sin even the smallest, and try to uproot entirely from it every passion, however slight.

“Look at that other person: he has received an insult, an outrageous affront. See how excited he is, his impatience is ready to burst forth; but he restrains himself, he succeeds in mastering his passion, however much it may cost him. What agitation! what conflict in his heart! Every time he sees the man who has insulted him, the agitation is renewed;

he strives to retain his self-possession and to forgive ; yet he does not venture to reckon on always having sufficient self-command, and avoids meeting the person who has offended him or speaking to him. Why does he act thus ? Because he does not wish to overcome his passion, and prefers pacifying and soothing it to tearing it up by the roots. Yet this would be the only way to attain and secure peace. Thus, continuing in imperfection without endeavouring to get out of that state, he contracts a countless number of little debts to the divine justice, which he need not have incurred had he but adopted those effectual means which he has neglected.

“Now comes the hour of death. His soul appears before God. Released from the bonds of the body, he springs naturally towards Him who is his beginning and his end. But what is his grief at seeing that for a time he must be deprived of the vision of God, because he has neglected those easy means he had of avoiding sin and satisfying for his offences ! What causes his greatest suffering is much less the torments of Purgatory than the pain of being separated from God, and being unable to see Him face to face and to praise Him with the Saints. He has at least one consolation, which is that some day he will see God, will possess Him, and glorify Him for ever. This thought gives him the desire of suffering still more, in order to make a more speedy expiation ; above all, it gives him perfect patience in the midst of his affliction. This affliction is very great, and he calls aloud on his brethren on earth, who are able to relieve him by their prayers, imploring them to have pity on him and assist him. Bear in mind, My daughter, that you ought to pray for these souls, because God so wills ;

for He loves them, He desires that they should be speedily freed that they may go to praise and bless Him eternally in Heaven. Pray for them, that they may be delivered from their torments, that their deliverance may be hastened, and they may be put in possession of eternal bliss. Pray for them; in praying for them you will pray also for yourself, you will do a thing agreeable to God, who will be pleased at your doing it; you will deliver these souls, and you will have in them so many intercessors in Heaven to help you to sanctify yourself more and more whilst you are on earth, or to deliver you from Purgatory if after death you have not fully satisfied the justice of God."

Here is what the Saviour Jesus said to me of a person who is advancing more and more in perfection and dies in that state: "Look at that person: he acknowledges God as the Creator and Master of all things; he acknowledges that He deserves to be faithfully served and loved, whether for Himself because of His infinite perfections or for the sake of the benefits He has heaped upon him. He also endeavours to do His will in the least things, to abstain from everything which can displease Him, to satisfy His justice for the sins he has committed, and thus to repair His glory. He neglects nothing for this end, hardly ever loses sight of God, and refers all things to Him at all times and in all places.

"Now comes the hour of death. He sees it arrive with pleasure; never having attached himself to the things of this world, he quits them without regret to go and be united for ever to the only object of his desires and affections. He appears before God all fair and all pure, and God judges him worthy of being admitted immediately into the place of his everlasting

repose. What happiness ! what joy ! He is in the abode of glory, he sees God face to face, he gazes upon Him, he loves Him, he blesses Him, he is immersed in the Divinity, whose splendour ravishes him and penetrates him through and through. Torrents of delights flow upon him from God, and inundate him like a sea in which he is completely immersed ; they would be more than he could bear were he not united to God and in a manner divinised. His memory recalls the troubles, the sufferings, the humiliations, the persecutions, the mortifications, everything which he has undergone and which has merited for him his happiness, and he breaks out into canticles of thanksgiving, acknowledging a thousand times the mercy of God, who has been pleased to recompense so little a thing with a felicity so great. He is sovereignly happy ; and what enhances his happiness is the thought that it will never end. His understanding is all filled, all penetrated with God. His will is completely satisfied ; he has but one desire, God. He possesses Him undividedly, he possesses Him for ever. Is anything to be compared to this possession ?”

2. Everything obeys God except man.

One Sunday in Lent I was on my knees in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. I was asking pardon of Jesus for my iniquities and those of all Christians. The Saviour had come into my soul in Holy Communion. I entered into my heart, where I beheld Him seated as on the Altar ; He spoke to me as follows :—

“ My daughter, I am the Most High, and I dwell in

the loftiest heights of the heavens. I cast My eyes down upon the world, I penetrate to the very depth of the heart of man, and discern his most secret thoughts. I command the stars of the firmament, I command the cataracts of heaven, I command the earth. I command the irrational animals which people the forests and the deserts, and My rule extends to all the powers of the heavens. The stars of the firmament obey My voice by the regularity of their courses and the effusion of their light ; the cataracts obey My voice by pouring their waters in abundance over the earth, the overflowings whereof run down into the sea ; the earth obeys My voice and decks itself with its verdure, its fruits, and its grain for the nourishment of man. I command the animals ; they hearken to My voice, they lay aside their fierceness, and become as gentle as lambs. I command the archangels and all the powers of Heaven, and My orders are punctually executed.

“ I also command man ; I make known to him My will, I engrave My commandments on his heart and on stone. Man alone does not obey. He rejects My laws, he treads them under foot. Man rebels against Me. I sent him My prophets to bring him back into the right way and recall to him My will. He put these prophets to death, or despised their warnings. I Myself came among men by making Myself man. You know, My daughter, in what manner they listened to My voice, you know how they treated Me. They rose up against Me. They called to their aid the malice of the powers of hell, they delivered Me by treachery into the hands of My executioners : they made Me die the most disgraceful and most cruel of deaths.

“See how man alone is in revolt against his God. He alone is disobedient to God. And yet every day the work of My mortal life, the work of the redemption that was wrought on Calvary, is continued by the ministry of My priests, and the efficacy of My sacrifice on the Altar. But how small is the number of good servants ! Among the angels were to be found rebels, but they fell, and experienced only the rigour of My justice and of My vengeance. I come among men with My love and My mercy, and these guilty and wicked rebels harden themselves more and more every day in their revolt against Me. They break My laws and My commandments. I invite them to come and range themselves among those who are faithful to Me, who taste the sweetness of My yoke, on whom I lavish My graces and benedictions, and they refuse to give heed to My exhortations, and prefer to listen to the deceitful and lying voice of Satan. O My daughter, what conduct is this ! Woe to these wicked men ! The day of vengeance and of chastisement will come upon them, and they will not be able to escape Me. My voice will be all-powerful then. It will be the voice of My justice, which shivers the lofty oaks of Libanus as a child breaks a straw in its hands.

“My daughter, ever submit yourself wholly to My laws and My commandments. Consecrate to Me your will, abandon it to Me, and you shall live in peace with your Saviour.”

3. *Of concupiscence.*

One day, after Holy Communion, Jesus seated Himself in my heart on a magnificent throne. He diffused a brilliant light within my soul which

appeared to me more beautiful than usual. My heart resembled a little chamber, the ceiling and walls of which glittered like white clouds illuminated by the sun. All around I saw a broad strip of gold supporting branches of foliage. The floor was not of polished wood, it was one large plate of purest gold, covering the surface of the chamber. The throne of Jesus was raised a little, and enclosed by a slight golden balustrade. I threw myself on my knees before this railing to gaze at Jesus and listen to Him. But soon I felt myself moved to go and look at the other side of the Saviour's throne. I could not resist this attraction. My angel took me by the hand, and I followed. He opened a small door and I perceived a dark and gloomy room. In the centre a fire was burning, fed with large fagots, which were being moved and stirred from time to time by demons frightful to behold. The angel shut the door, and I returned before the Saviour Jesus.

"My daughter," He said to me, "this is the explanation of what you have seen. The dark and gloomy room is the body of man ; the fire burning therein is concupiscence ; the fagots which feed the fire are the passions, which the devils unceasingly excite. It is I who by My power keep that door shut, and slacken the fire with the waters of My grace. If your heart appears so brilliant it is because I dwell in it and illuminate it with My light. Abandoned to itself, it would become black and dark like that chamber.

"My daughter, it is mortal sin which gave concupiscence entrance into the soul of man ; that is, as I have already told you, the disorderly inclination of the soul, which disposes it to attach itself to the creature and forget the Creator. You are on the earth, My

daughter, like Eve in Paradise. On one side you have God and His commandments, of which He permits you to make use, as He permitted your first parents to partake of all the fruits of Paradise, and this use of God and His commandments is the assurance of life to you. But you have also creatures, you have created good, and God has said to you : 'In what day soever thou shalt attach thyself to creatures more than to Me, thou shalt die.' Now, know this, My daughter : that which is continually showing you these creatures like a fruit which you may pluck and appropriate to yourself, instead of attaching yourself to God more than to them, is not the serpent, but your concupiscence, or that secret propensity which original sin has implanted in you.

"This propensity is not in itself evil, it is not a sin which is imputable to you, any more than the temptation of the devil, who showed Eve the forbidden fruit and urged her to gather and then to eat it, would have been evil or a sin to her, if she had resisted ; but, on the contrary, that temptation overcome would have been the ground of her confirmation in justice through her obedience to the will of God. Thus, My daughter, concupiscence is not an evil if you resist it and overcome it ; it is, on the contrary, an occasion of no little merit to you. But if you let yourself be conquered by it, your passions will come to feed its flame, the demons will kindle them like fuel in a furnace, and this fire, this burning furnace, will consume and destroy you."

4. *Figures of sin, of the devil, and of sinners, of mortal sin and venial sin.*

These words of the Saviour Jesus made me sad,

because I dreaded the disastrous effects of concupiscence in myself ; but they also gave me confidence, because I knew He would not forsake me, but would be with me to resist that propensity which we all experience but are bound to withstand. Then I saw Jesus rise, open the balustrade which surrounded His throne, and come to me. "Rise, My daughter," He said, "and follow Me." I rose and followed the Saviour. We entered a little gallery, which was on the left hand. It was so narrow that one person could scarcely pass along it. At the end of the gallery we ascended a staircase, which was also very narrow ; at the bottom of it I saw another, which we went up. This last was broad. When we nearly reached the middle, Jesus said to me, "Stop, My daughter." I stopped. Jesus passed on one side, and I remained half-way up the steps. On looking below, I beheld an immense abyss which my eyes had not perceived when mounting. Soon I saw a roaring lion appear, which made as though it would devour me. I did not dare to move onward. "My daughter," said the Saviour, "do not be alarmed, advance against that lion, put your foot upon its neck, it will die." I obeyed ; I placed my foot upon the lion's neck, I pressed it strongly on it, without feeling any fear, and after a few violent struggles it died. "Take it by the jaws," He added, "and rend it asunder." I took the lion by the jaws, and rending it in two like a piece of bread I threw it down the abyss.

We then continued our ascent. Jesus went first, I followed after Him. Scarcely had I advanced a few steps when I perceived a bird of prey, of a very large size. It had an enormous beak and terrific talons. The Saviour then placed me in front of Him. I went

on boldly, and the moment that the bird was about to strike me with its beak, I seized it vigorously by the neck and threw it down the abyss.

After this, we reached the top of the staircase, where I saw a quadrangular space surrounded by walls on three sides. These walls were about eight feet in width and as many in height. Immediately I beheld a dreadful beast coming towards me ; it frightened me, and to this day, when I think of it, I cannot help having a certain feeling of terror. I never saw anything so hideous. It was not a scorpion or a serpent, yet it crawled on the ground. Its skin was not covered with hair, it was tough without being hard, and seemed to be gorged with thick, black blood. It had four paws near its head, but nevertheless they did not enable it to walk ; it stretched them out, and then dragged its body heavily along, which was nearly three feet in length. Its head was scarcely visible. When I saw it lash its tail at me, I was frightened, and turned towards Jesus, as a child to its mother in a moment of danger.

I should never have ventured to touch this beast. The Saviour gave me a little cross to defend myself with. I laid it deliberately on the beast's back ; instantly it began to wriggle and leap about ; then it took the cross between its teeth and broke it. Jesus gave me a larger one, the weight of which the beast was unable to bear, and it died. Then the Saviour gave me a staff, and with it I rolled the beast over the precipice. Blood flowed in torrents from its wounds.

After this, the Saviour conducted me by another road, and I found myself within my heart ; there I beheld Jesus still seated on His throne, and surrounded by a golden balustrade. "My daughter," He said to me,

“ I have shown you in a sensible manner what concupiscence is ; I have wished to show you also in the same way what sin is, and what the devil and sinners are. While proceeding with Me, you met on your way a lion, which sought to devour you. I gave you the strength to kill it and tear it in pieces. You met also a bird of prey ; I gave you the strength to seize it and throw it down into the abyss. Again you met a frightful beast, the sight of which struck you with terror ; you laid two crosses on its back ; it died, and the abyss swallowed it up.

“ The lion represents mortal sin, against which it is necessary to fight ; it must be slain and rent asunder, that it may never more appear. The bird of prey represents the devil, who desires to carry off souls, and attacks even the holiest. He must be courageously encountered, repulsed, and hurled into the abyss. The beast represents sinners, those great sinners, whose perverse dispositions, shameful vices, passions, and cruelty take from them all likeness to God, and make them rather resemble brute animals. They cannot walk upright, or look up to Heaven ; they drag themselves along and crawl ignominiously on the earth ; they inspire so great a terror that no one ventures to approach or to touch them. You laid a light cross upon it ; it took it between its teeth and broke it. It is thus God sends them afflictions and crosses, but instead of submitting themselves and returning to Him, they break these crosses, that is to say, they render them of no avail, and rebel yet more and more. Let a larger cross be laid upon them, they cannot bear the weight of it, they die and hasten to corruption, which was figured to you by the wounds of the beast, whence blood flowed profusely, that blood of their

brethren unjustly shed, that blood from their own veins, poisoned with their horrible pleasures and filthy indulgences. With a staff you threw it down into the abyss: this staff is an image of the rod of God, who in His justice casts sinners into hell.

“My daughter, when I was on earth it was My pleasure to speak to My Apostles in parables and figures. By parables My teachings were imprinted more deeply on their minds. It is thus I act with you. But I do something even more for you, I manifest Myself to you, and I cause you to behold the figures or the reality of the things of which I speak. Learn to value this special favour which I grant you, that you may profit by My instructions, may attach yourself more and more closely to Me, and disengage yourself from creatures. Then, My daughter, you will truly avoid sin.

“You know there are two kinds of sin: mortal sin and venial sin. Now, do you know in what they consist? In turning away from God and cleaving to the creature; with a difference, however, for the sins are different.

“He who attaches himself to creatures, My daughter, does not sin by the mere fact of the attachment. God has made creatures, and therefore it is allowable to use them. But there is a rule for the guidance of this use. Creatures are not the last end of man, and he is forbidden to attach himself to them as to his last end. Consequently, if you attach yourself to them in a direct and definitive way, as to your end, if you forget God, who alone is and ought to be your end, and turn away from Him, then, My daughter, there is mortal sin. This adhesion, this attachment, which produces estrangement from God, is mortal sin.

“Venial sin is also a drawing near to the creature, and a withdrawal from God ; but these have not the same character as in mortal sin.

“He who attaches himself to the creature or to the use of created things, but not as to his final end, and who by this attachment is removed from God, not directly and actually, but in this sense that he puts more obstacles and difficulties in the way of approaching Him, sins venially.

“From this you will be able to understand, My daughter, what is the malice and blackness of mortal sin.

“Man’s religion consists in having confidence in God, loving Him, and attaching himself to Him. What is it that man does by mortal sin ? He withdraws his confidence from God, as though He were not worthy of it, in order to give it to the creature, as though it deserved his confidence. He breaks the sweet bonds which attach him to God, to fasten himself to the creature by bonds of iron. He says to God, ‘Come into my heart, come and knock at my door. The door of my heart shall remain closed against Thee, and if Thou hast already entered in, I will eject Thee.’ He says to the creature, ‘I give thee my heart, come and take possession of it ; it belongs to thee.’ This, My daughter, is as bad as idolatry ; it is real idolatry ; it is to divinise the creature ; it is to render it the same honours as to God ; it is to make it the final end ; it is the idolatry of the heart.

“And indeed nothing, My daughter, is to be compared to the ingratitude of which man is guilty in this act ; nothing is to be compared to the blackness with which it covers his soul. God, who was his light and who made his soul shine by His grace, like

a star in the firmament, has withdrawn from him, leaving him in the darkness which he has chosen for the commission of his crime, and which has encompassed him about as a fish is immersed in the waters of the sea. Darkness is henceforth the element in which he will move: darkness of mind, darkness of will, darkness of heart. This darkness will penetrate and infiltrate itself through his whole being, making him blacker than a cinder on your hearth. Henceforth one general vice will pervade his being and his nature. His eye, which was made to see God, will see only Satan. His ear, which ought to be open only to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, will hearken only to the suggestions of the prince of darkness. His palate, which ought to relish only the sweetness of the Bread of Angels, will taste only the bitterness of criminal pleasures. His hands, which ought to be joined only to be raised to God in prayer, will be armed against Him to work evil. What monstrous effects will not mortal sin have wrought within him! What more precipitous descent to hurry him on to sin anew!

“Is there anything to be compared to mortal sin? O My daughter, I say it to you in truth, could all men have united their efforts to efface one single mortal sin, to repair the injury which it does to God, and chase away the darkness and disorder which it introduces into a soul, they would never have succeeded. To efface mortal sin, there was need of My Incarnation; there was need that I should assume human nature, should impart to it the light of My Divinity, in order to restore to it its brightness and obliterate the stains which covered it. There was need that I should impart to it the rectitude of My Divinity, in order to show it the way of truth; there was need that My

Divinity should unite itself to it in order truly to repair the offence offered to My Father.

“Ah, my daughter, sinners give no heed thereto. They continue to live in sin, to commit sin. They endeavour to render the merits and the virtue of My Incarnation and My Passion of no effect. Woe to them, woe to them !

“See how God punished the sin of the Angels, how He punished the sin of Adam, as throughout all time He has punished the sins of the nations by terrible scourges. See how in a time near your own He punished the crimes of your France by wars which desolated her ; and what calamities are still ready to fall upon her. God will likewise punish mortal sin in each individual sinner, unless he become converted to live the only true life ; He will condemn him to the fire of hell, and deprive him of the bliss of Heaven.

“My daughter, let the malice, the blackness of mortal sin, let the thoughts of the eternal vengeance of God, which would pursue you into the place of His justice, make you carefully avoid sin. Yes, remain always united to My Father ; remain always united to Me. Let this be your only bond, your only good.

“You ought not only to avoid and flee mortal sin, you ought also to reject with all your heart the smallest venial sin. Venial sin is an offence so injurious to the heart of God that you could never sufficiently expiate it or regret it. Avoid, then, O My daughter, a sin which is so displeasing and so offensive to God. Flee this sin, and flee it carefully, for this sin will lead you naturally and with great facility to mortal sin. Flee this sin, for God punishes it with very severe chastisements in this life and in the next. The flames of Purgatory are terrible, and

they who are in a state of venial sin at the hour of their death will have to pass through these flames to expiate it before entering into Heaven. Flee this sin, because it diminishes your strength for doing what is good, by depriving you of the numerous graces which but for this sin God would grant you.

“I know, My daughter, that your weakness and the weakness of men is so great that you cannot without a special grace of God avoid all venial sins ; but you are able, with the aid of the habitual and daily graces which God grants you, to labour more and more to diminish your venial sins ; you are able not to commit venial sins of deliberate purpose, and thus more and more to win My favours, and those of My Father.

“If you desire to flee and detest all kinds of sin more and more, begin by intimately convincing yourself of your weakness and powerlessness. This clear knowledge of yourself will make you fearful of falling and separating yourself from God ; it will lead you to put all your trust in Him. You will give God your heart ; you will consecrate it to Him, and attach it to Him by the love you bear Him.

“Then, My daughter, if you have committed sin in past time, or shall commit it in the future, excite in yourself sorrow for these faults, and, kneeling before My Cross, promise God not to offend Him any more. Let your repentance be true and sincere, and immediately God will once more look upon you with complacency, especially at that moment when, on acknowledging your faults to your confessor, He grants you the forgiveness of them by the instrumentality of My minister. After this thank God for the pardon you have received, and offer to Him, in expiation of the sins that have been forgiven you, all the troubles,

contradictions, and sufferings of your life, and all the griefs and trials of every day ; thus you will make every instant a tribute of praise to God by the good work you do, and in expiation of your sins which will diminish that of Eternity.* Finally, pray much, and you will avoid sin."

It was thus the Saviour spoke to me. I listened to Him attentively, and when He had ceased speaking, I beheld the balustrade rise and screen Him altogether from view. Then I left my heart and withdrew.

5. *Of the capital sins and the means of repelling them.*

One Sunday, during Holy Mass, I had my eyes fixed on the Altar. At the moment of consecration I beheld Jesus on His throne, resplendent with light. At first this light dazzled me, nevertheless I was able to bear it, and the more I gazed on Jesus the sweeter and softer did His radiance become. I observed that His countenance wore an expression of sadness, which pierced my very soul. I was not able to speak a word to Him. After communicating I speedily entered into my heart ; there I found Jesus as I had seen Him on the Altar. "Lord," I said to Him, as I cast myself at His feet, "what is it that troubles Thee ?" He looked kindly upon me and said : "My daughter, what troubles Me is the sight of the numerous vices which I discern in the hearts of men, dragging them to their ruin and everlasting woe.

"The vices, My daughter, are for evil what the virtues are for good. The vices are the enemies of

* *i.e.*, of the life after death, when the soul is said to pass into Eternity.

the virtues, they drive them away and banish them completely from the hearts of men ; they defile hearts, and deprive them of all beauty ; at length they cleave to the heart, and penetrate it so deeply that it is very difficult to extirpate them. Vice in a heart is the origin of sin, the source of all evils, the root of death. It is an iron chain which encircles and holds fast the soul like the body of an unhappy prisoner. Vice is a defilement more adhesive than pitch, corrupting whatever it touches. Vice is man's greatest foe ; it holds him under its dominion, it oppresses him with a frightful cruelty. It is unceasingly striving with man in order to conquer and overcome him ; it never leaves him a moment's rest. No sooner has it got a man into its power, no sooner has he opened the door of his heart to it, to close it against virtue, than this emissary of Satan abides therein as its master, to prevent virtue, the envoy of God, from coming and taking possession.

“A vicious heart has not a moment of rest, calmness, or tranquillity. This is because rest is impossible to one who is far from God. Now, vice removes the heart of man far from his God. Calmness also is impossible to one who does not lean upon God. Now, vice breaks the staff which God puts into man's hand, in his pilgrimage through life to Eternity. for defending himself against his enemies ; that staff is the Cross and the love of My Cross. Tranquillity is impossible to one with whom God does not abide. Now, vice has driven God far from the heart, and stirred up within it a tempestuous storm which threatens to wreck, and does actually wreck it. How many lost souls have succumbed under the weight of their vices ! How many accumulated merits have

been rendered fruitless by the vices which these souls have allowed to gain an entrance into them ! O My daughter, at the sight of all these disasters I cannot but be troubled ; My desire would be that all souls should be adorned with the virtues of which I gave them the example by My Life and the grace by My Passion ; My desire would be that they should unite themselves to Me, so that I might present them all to God, My Father ; and because this desire of My heart is not realised I groan, My daughter, over the blindness, the indifference, and the ingratitude of men, who do nothing to make themselves pleasing to Me, nothing to promote their true interests.

“ My daughter, come to console My afflicted Heart, fight continually against the vices which would fain implant themselves within you. Vices urge to the commission of sins, whose source and principle they are. Uproot all vices, and you will no longer sin, you will fight against sins ; open not the door to vices, and it will be closed to sins.

“ I will now show you how this is to be done.

“ He who desires to make war on the vices of his corrupt nature and drive them from his heart, ought first to apply himself to ascertain the character, the degrees and the acts of these vices. How could you combat an enemy whom you were ignorant of, whom you did not see, or might mistake for a friend ?

“ He who desires to expel the vices of his corrupt nature ought to pursue them with an implacable hatred because of the miseries they work within him ; for they are the source of all sins, the aliment of all kinds of disorderly movements, and the subject of the most tormenting disquietudes.

“ He who desires to expel the vices of his corrupt

nature ought to avoid all occasions which are calculated to foster or strengthen those vices. If you are inclined to anger, avoid disputes, shun altercation and strife.

“He who desires to expel the vices of his corrupt nature ought to resist them as soon as he feels their attack coming, as soon as he sees them about to rise up and assail him, so as not to let them gain ground and obtain the ascendancy.

“He who desires to expel the vices of his corrupt nature will fight against them by aid of the opposite virtues; he will combat impurity by chastity, pride by humility, anger by mildness. He will not forgive himself the slightest failure, but will punish it by some austerity and severe chastisement which will quell the revolt produced by that vice.

“He who desires to expel the vices of his corrupt nature will watch himself narrowly, and take every precaution of which he is capable in order that he may do nothing by thought, word, or deed which is calculated to stimulate them.

“He who desires to expel the vices of his corrupt nature will not try to combat them all at one and the same time; he will attack that which is most deeply rooted and the most dangerous, that which is the greatest cause of his forgetting God, and tends most to alienate him from Him. Against this vice he will direct all his forces, all his vigour and courage, and when he has conquered it he will attack another. Separately he will vanquish all, but he will never succeed in overcoming them all at once, if they have all dominion over his heart.

“He who desires to expel the vices of his corrupt nature will never remain idle. Labour is the enemy

of all vices ; but, as there are some which resist even labour, and which on certain occasions labour will even tend to develop, as pride, for example, he will join prayer to labour, he will beg God to grant him the assistance of His grace, he will abandon himself to His mercy and Providence, he will invoke the aid of My Mother and of the saints, who are watching his efforts ; and when he has triumphed, he will not ascribe the victory to himself, he will confess that he owes all to God, and that without Him he would have been worsted a thousand times."

6. *Of pride, vainglory, ambition, presumption, obstinacy, a spirit of contradiction, hypocrisy, ostentation, arrogance.*

The Saviour Jesus also taught me the number, nature, effects, and remedies of the capital vices which can enter the soul and reduce it to slavery.

"The capital vices, My daughter, are seven in number ; that is to say, there are seven vices which are the source and origin of all the other vices. They are pride, gluttony, lust, covetousness, envy, anger, and sloth.

"Pride is an excessive estimation, or an immoderate desire, of a man's own excellence and merits.

"It is allowable, My daughter, for a man to love himself, to esteem the good which God has bestowed upon him, his intelligence, and all the gifts of fortune, but on the condition that he acknowledges that everything comes from God, that he has nothing of himself, and consequently that he ought not to regard what is good in himself as his own work or as his

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right. It is even allowable to desire to possess what is good, of whatever nature it may be, provided it be desired, not for self-exaltation and aggrandisement, but in order to labour for the glory of God.

“He who is proud separates God from everything which is good in himself ; he does not refer everything to Him as to its principle, he refers everything to himself, and believes himself to be its author and its master. The proud man takes complacency in everything he sees in himself, gifts of mind, gifts of person, gifts of fortune, instead of attaching himself to nothing and referring everything to God.

“The proud man hearkens to no one’s advice, not even of the wisest persons and those most advanced in age ; he does not like that any one should show him his shortcomings, or he is offended and murmurs against the person who admonishes him.

“The proud man ever seeks the foremost places, preferring himself before everything however exalted ; he ridicules the simplicity of the humble, never submits, or if he does, it is with reluctance, loves to contradict, prefers high birth to virtuous conduct, never condescends to converse with those who are younger than himself, and disdains to associate with the aged, whose superior he believes himself to be.

“The proud man practises no restraint in his behaviour, there is no modesty in his language, or respect in his obedience. He is hard of heart, obstinate in will, boastful in his discourse ; he is deceitful in his humility, caustic in his conversation, inveterate in his hatred, a foe to submission, greedy of power, desirous of supplanting every one, indolent in action and in work ; he wishes to know everything, and knows very little ; he likes to be always talking even of what he

does not understand, and to undertake everything while he is ignorant as to how he ought to set about it.

“Finally, the proud man fancies that all his acts are virtuous, and, if he acknowledges his sins, he always finds a thousand reasons for diminishing their gravity or to serve as an excuse.

“Thus, My daughter, all defects are to be found in the proud man. These are some of the principal ones which spring up in him: vainglory, ambition, presumption, obstinacy, a spirit of contradiction, hypocrisy, ostentation, arrogance.

“Vainglory is the complacency generally manifest, but sometimes secret, which a man feels in the advantages which he thinks he has over others, and the desire to be observed and praised by others. Can anything be more empty than this self-complacency and desire? What personal merit can there be in fortune, birth, or intelligence? Can anything be more inane than to exaggerate and exalt the amount of these advantages and rank them above those of others? Can there be any greater folly than to seek the esteem of men, a smoke which passes away and is scattered by the slightest breeze?

“Ambition is an immoderate desire of the heart which makes a man desire dignities and honours on account of the consideration which is attached to them.

“Presumption is that excessive self-confidence which makes a man persuade himself that he is capable of more than he is able to perform.

“Obstinacy is a groundless and unreasonable attachment to a man's own opinion, which he believes to be worth more than that of others.

“The spirit of contradiction is that impulse of the

heart which disposes a man to refute another's opinion in order to show himself to be his superior in knowledge and intellect.

"Hypocrisy is the deceitful and pretended performance of certain acts of virtue in order to attract the esteem of men.

"Ostentation is the immoderate use of magnificence in all the necessities of life ; as in houses, dress, food, in order to be more thought of.

"Arrogance is that inclination which leads a man to treat his neighbour imperiously, speak to him haughtily, and regard him with contempt.

"Such is pride and such are the vices which it engenders in the soul. From what I have said you ought to understand how common a vice pride is. Learn also what a dangerous vice it is. It is pride which ruins all virtues, cutting them up at their roots ; it is pride which then draws the soul into all kinds of disorder. The proud man is capable of anything : he would even try to exalt himself above God, if he could.

"Moreover, of all sins, the sin of pride is that which God hates most. See how God punished the sin of the Angels, which was a sin of pride. See how He punished the sin of Adam, which was a sin of pride. See how He punished the sin of Nebuchodonosor, which was a sin of pride. So also will He severely punish all men for the pride that shall be found in them. The proud man desires to exalt himself, but God will cast him down to the very depths of hell.

"Flee this dreadful vice, My daughter, that you may abide ever under the protection of God, and be secure against the dominion of Satan ; flee this dreadful vice, that you may never give entrance into

your heart to all kinds of wickedness, but may foster therein the germs of all the virtues.

“To this end, consider, My daughter, that pride is the cause of all the evils which afflict humanity and is predominant in all the sins which are committed against God.

“Consider yourself and all creatures. What do you find in yourself and in them? Nothingness and baseness: this thought will make you flee pride.

“Consider that God reserves for the proud the everlasting flames of a vengeful fire in the company of demons, and you will flee pride.

“Put far from you everything which could lead you to pride; get the better of this feeling when you perceive it rising in your heart.

“Finally, My daughter, have always before your eyes the example of My humility; bear always in mind the promises made to the humble, and the vengeance reserved for the proud; cleave to God with all your soul, have recourse to Him in the hour of temptation, come to converse sweetly with Me and to repose in My Heart, and pride will fly far from you.

“This is how you may know if pride is far from you and dwells not in your heart. If you refer all things to God; if you desire to submit to Him all that is in you and in other creatures; if you love to be forgotten, despised, and counted for nothing; if you do not seek the foremost places, or honours, or dignities; if you acknowledge that there is nothing in you or of you but sin and corruption, and that all good comes from God; if you believe yourself unworthy of every benefit you receive from God; if you patiently endure all the trials and contradictions of life; if you do not seek to do good for the sake of being applauded and praised;

if you refer to God the praises you receive ; if you are willing to procure yourself some humiliations and never to reject any that come to you ; if you give yourself wholly to God and wholly to Me,—then, My daughter, you will not be proud.”

7. *Of gluttony.*

“One of the most shameful vices is gluttony. Gluttony is an immoderate desire and use of the aliments necessary to life. In the matter of bodily sustenance men ought to have a rule, fixing the hour for their meals and the quantity of their food, as also the manner and spirit in which they should partake of it. The absence of this rule, which is that of temperance and sobriety, constitutes the vice of gluttony, its disorder and its malice. This rule cannot be the same for all persons, because some ought to take a larger amount of food, and more frequently, on account of their natural temperament or the work they have to do, but it is the same in this sense, that it does not allow of excess in any one.

“You may be guilty of gluttony, My daughter, in various ways....

“He who eats or drinks to excess, or takes more than he requires for repairing and sustaining his strength, is guilty of the sin of gluttony, and his sin is the graver in proportion as his excess is the greater.

“He who desires rare and dainty dishes, the delicate flavour of which may gratify his sensuality, he who desires his food to be seasoned with the finest sauces, is guilty of gluttony. It is allowable, however, for a person to partake without sin of such

food on occasions, for the sake of giving another pleasure, but not to indulge his own taste; and even then he should take care to mortify himself either in the matter of quantity or by not choosing what would be most agreeable to his sensuality.

“He who eats eagerly and greedily, he who devours with his eyes the dishes on the table before he is helped, is guilty of gluttony.

“He who in his meals will have none but costly viands, and has his table loaded with a profusion and a variety of dishes, is guilty of gluttony.

“He who without necessity, and for the mere pleasure of eating, anticipates the hour of his meals, he also is guilty of gluttony.

“What a shameful vice is this of gluttony! It was this which drove your first parents out of the earthly Paradise, enticed them to sin, and condemned them to death; for death is the penalty of sin.

“To avoid this vice, consider what an example I gave you of penance, sobriety, abstinence, mortification. Consider the example which the Saints have also given you in shunning this vice, and how by avoiding it they acquired real and solid virtues. It is their avoiding of this vice which enabled them to aspire ardently after the heavenly food of the soul, which attached them to Me and caused them to taste the sweetness of converse with Me, which purified all disorderly movements, brought their body into subjection, and thus preserved the liberty of the soul, and maintained them in strength, vigour, and courage.

“What, on the contrary, is the effect of gluttony? It leads to forgetfulness of God and obscuration of reason; it robs the soul of its vigour because it enervates the body; it deprives it of pious thoughts

and holy affections towards God, because it excites concupiscence, increases the power of the flesh, and drags it down into the abyss of sin. Consider how fatal this pleasure is, and how quickly it passes away, and consequently how little it deserves that you should love it.

“To avoid this vice, make a firm resolution never to take more than is necessary for you, not to be nice about the quality of what you eat, to restrain your appetite even when you feel hungry, not to be eager in satisfying it immediately ; in a word, to observe all the rules of temperance.

“You will observe then, My daughter, if you are fearful of being overtaken by gluttony, if you are determined to resist it, and begin your repast with that firm resolution ; if you do not indulge the pleasure of taste, or do not let yourself dwell upon it ; if you never take more than is necessary, and, when you are obliged sometimes to eat more, do so with reluctance ; finally, if you are faithful in offering what you eat to God, and thanking Him after partaking of it. Act thus, My daughter, and gluttony will never gain access to your heart.”

8. *Of lust.*

“Lust is the vice which excites in man all the disorderly movements of the flesh, and leads him to do acts contrary to purity.

“He who voluntarily allows his mind to dwell on immodest thoughts, who does not guard his eyes, but allows them to rest on indecent objects, who does not repress culpable movements in himself, and indulges in forbidden acts in regard to himself or to others,

who does not bridle his tongue, but permits it to give loose to evil discourse, who observes no circumspection in his relations with others, and seeks the company of persons of a different sex, who reads or writes immoral works—such an one, My daughter, is the victim of the vice of lust.

“The numerous chastisements which this vice has brought upon the world, the sad effects it produces in the soul, the injury it does to God, ought to lead you, My daughter, to flee and detest it with all your heart.

“It was this vice which provoked the deluge, and caused the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha; it was this vice which God punished in so terrible a manner among the Jewish people, and which My Apostles so earnestly enjoined all Christian souls to flee; it is this vice which in all times has peopled hell. How, then, ought men to flee and detest it, that they may not have part in the maledictions of God!

“They who are addicted to this vice, My daughter, are rarely penitent, and are seldom converted to God; it is a hideous leprosy which eats into them and devours them secretly; it is a passion which speedily takes such possession of him into whom it finds entrance, that it torments him incessantly, and can never be appeased; it is a propensity which brutalises a man and renders him viler than the beasts. The intellect of the lustful man becomes dulled, and at last is altogether extinguished; his will becomes powerless and weaker than a reed shaken by the wind, for the reed remains unbroken, but his will is shattered, and his body is exhausted, and becomes a mass of rottenness and corruption. How carefully, then, ought men to fly from this vice that they may not experience these miserable effects.

“ Among all the motives which ought to impel you to shun this vice there is none more powerful than that of the immensity of the injury which it does to God.

“ What is man, My daughter ? He is a living and reasonable being, composed of body and soul, and made to the image of God. What is it the lustful man does ? He defiles this image, he spoils it, covers it with ignominy, and says to God : ‘ I am Thy image, but I despise Thee, and I will drag in the mire and mud of my passions this image of Thyself, so beautiful and so pure, of which Thou hast given me the custody and the care.’

“ What is it the lustful man does ? He resists the will of God the Father, who wills that men should sanctify themselves and put far from them all impurity.

“ What is it the lustful man does ? He outrages Me by rendering the price of the ransom I have paid for him fruitless ; he outrages Me by defiling a portion of My mystical body ; he outrages Me by severing himself from Me and refusing the alliance which I have desired to make with him.

“ What is it the lustful man does ? He does despite to the Holy Spirit, who has chosen his body as the temple in which He wills to dwell ; he insults Him by rejecting His grace and His gifts that he may give himself up to Satan and his suggestions.

“ That you may flee for ever this shameful vice, always reflect on its malice ; refrain from every act which might become the beginning of this vice ; put from you the first thoughts of lust, as you would shake off a live coal which fell upon your dress ; never give them entrance into your heart ; do penance, mortify yourself, and, above all, pray much. Prayer and

fasting are the two weapons which alone can contend with success against lust ; they stifle it and put it to death.

“ You will know what strength you have to resist this vice if you experience trouble and grief when you feel the stings of the flesh, without, however, letting yourself be wounded by them ; if every day you subdue them more and more so that they become weaker and weaker ; if you reject all bad thoughts without voluntarily dwelling upon them ; if you love chastity as the apple of your eye, and allow nothing so much as to touch it ; finally, if you have reached such a point that you foresee and avoid the least thing opposed to purity.”

9. *Of covetousness.*

“ Covetousness, My daughter, is an inordinate love of riches. To desire riches or the goods of this world in order to use them in a suitable manner and according to the needs of a man’s condition and state in life is a permissible thing ; but to desire riches merely to see them accumulate and to possess them, to desire riches and employ all sorts of unjust means to increase them is one of the most culpable of vices.

“ There is none more wicked than the covetous man ; not only will he do his neighbour all manner of injury, but he will even sell his own soul to get money : hence there will be no place for him in Heaven.

“ The covetous man, in fact, does not love God, does not love his neighbour, does not love himself ; he loves only money. He does not love God, for I said it* when

* St. Matthew vi. 24. St. Luke xvi. 13.

I was on earth, and I repeat it, My daughter, no man can serve two masters at one and the same time, God and mammon. He does not love his neighbour, for he is ready to perpetrate, and does perpetrate, all manner of injustice against him in order to increase his own fortune. Neither does he love himself; he does not love his body, for he often refuses it what it needs; he does not love his soul, for he does not make that use of his money which alone could add to his spiritual treasures.

“Without charity, how shall he enter into Heaven? Without charity, how will he fulfil his obligations? Without charity, what will be his conduct towards God? He will deny Him, forsake Him. How great a vice, then, is covetousness, and how sovereignly displeasing it is to God!

“The covetous man loses no opportunity to augment his wealth. He employs every means to improve his fortune, without regard to its justice or its injustice. He lives a poor and miserable life, not only to keep what he has, but also to add to it by exciting compassion. He groans over the least misfortune, the slightest loss he may chance to incur. Finally, the covetous man has but one thought, the thought of money.

“That you may flee covetousness, My daughter, consider the many crimes to which it impels men; reflect how it separates from God, how it extinguishes fraternal charity, and what injury it inflicts on the covetous man himself.

“Consider how quickly the goods and riches of this world pass away, and what trifling accidents may ruin the most brilliant fortunes.

“Consider how incapable riches are of satisfying the

desires of your soul. The capacity of your soul is boundless ; God only can fill it.

“Consider, in fine, My daughter, the example I gave you of detachment and poverty, and you will disengage yourself from everything in order to seek, desire, and love God alone.

“He who is free from covetousness, My daughter, willingly shares his goods with the poor, has no fear of being in want of the necessities of life, is not anxious about the morrow, does not occupy his mind perpetually with gold and silver, commits no injustice against his brethren, hopes in God, and abandons himself to Him.”

10. *Of envy.*

“Envy is a feeling of pain and sadness which arises at the sight of another’s prosperity.

“This pain and sadness may be produced by an apprehension of the evil that may be caused to yourself, your family or friends, by the power or prosperity of the person whom you think to be, or who actually is, your enemy, or that of your family, or of the circle to which you belong. This kind of sadness is not culpable envy, because it does not proceed so much from the prosperity you see in others as from the evil which you fear may accrue to yourself or to others in consequence of that prosperity.

“This pain and sadness may be produced by the sight of the abundance of spiritual goods which you discern in another, and which you feel to be wanting in yourself. This envy is not sinful, if it urges you to advance in the way of justice and truth in order that you may merit the favours of God. It is sinful if you

are saddened at seeing these good things in another solely because he possesses them, and you would prefer seeing your neighbour poor and destitute like yourself.

“This pain and sadness may also be caused because you see that others surpass you in goods and in fortune, and you are unwilling to be outdone by any one ; this pain and sadness constitutes the vice of envy, for the sight of another’s good, far from making you sad, ought on the contrary to give you joy and pleasure.

“This vice is abominable and sovereignly displeasing to God. Look at the jealous man : he is sorry for his neighbour’s prosperity, and rejoices on the contrary at the evils that befall him ; he is dumb and passes over in silence the goodness and virtue he sees in him ; he prevents his doing good as much as he can ; he puts an ill construction on what he does ; and exposes all the defects he observes in him.

“There is no worse vice than envy, for there is nothing more difficult to cure, nothing which causes a man more suffering and gives him less satisfaction. Other vices impart some sort of satisfaction ; envy is the cause of nothing but trouble and vexation. Envy gives no pain to him who is the object of it, but it is a torment to the man in whom it is found ; it does not leave him a moment’s rest, tranquillity and peace.

“And what is the use of envy to him who is possessed by it ? Will the loss of the goods which he grudges him whom he envies make those goods pass into his own hands ? Rather, if he loved his neighbour, if he rejoiced at seeing his wealth and prosperity, might he entertain the hope of being admitted to some share in his good fortune.

“Envy proceeds from pride ; it is only because a man desires to be superior to him whom he envies that he is jealous of him ; consequently, as pride is a vice which ought to be repelled, so ought envy to be rejected with equal abhorrence.

“Yes, My daughter, fly from envy, which destroys charity in hearts, precludes all advance in perfection, and renders a man odious to his fellow-men, to angels and to God.

“He who is free from envy, so far from feeling sad at the good fortune of others, rejoices thereat with all his heart. He listens with pleasure and satisfaction when the virtues and prosperity of others are applauded, and sincerely rejoices in the praises bestowed. He is pained when he hears of another’s misfortune, and never exposes the defects of any one. For himself and his brethren he desires only the goods of Eternity, and sighs only after the possession of God.”

II. *Of anger.*

“Anger, My daughter, is an inordinate love of vengeance.

“Every kind of anger is not a vice or culpable. Anger is a vice and a sin only so far as the desire of revenge is an ill-regulated desire.

“Thus, to feel anger against sin and against the sinner, because sin is offensive to God, is not a vice nor a sin ; in this sense anger is the rule of discipline. But this desire of punishing a fault that has been committed is not what men mean by anger. Anger, in the sense you attach to it, always implies the desire of vengeance and of personal vengeance.

“Anger proceeds from an offence received or supposed

to be received, and from the desire which is entertained of avenging that offence.

“He is guilty of anger who on account of an injury received, or supposed to be received, is excited and incensed to such a degree as to strike or hurt some one.

“He is guilty of anger who, when offended, breaks out into invectives and insults against the person who has offended him.

“He is guilty of anger who seeks to wrangle and quarrel with one who has offended him, or by the gravity of his countenance or his silence testifies to his resentment against him.

“He is guilty of anger who harbours rancour in his heart for several days or months, and even years, against one who has offended him, and abstains for a long time from visiting him.

“Finally, he is guilty of anger who punishes his inferiors much more than they deserve, and thus abuses his authority.

“Nothing is more pernicious and more dangerous than anger ; it deprives a man of reason ; it estranges him from God ; it separates brethren and the most intimate friends ; it produces most disastrous wars ; it causes all sorts of evils.

“My daughter, never give way to anger ; let nothing be capable of exciting in you so base a feeling. Whatever the offence may be, and whoever the offender may be, say to yourself that God has permitted it in order to try you and accustom you to practise meekness. Far from giving way to anger when you have received provocation, control yourself, preserve your self-possession, and neither by word, nor action, nor by any movement show signs of disturbance or betray animosity. To act in this way, My daughter, is to

appease those who have offended you. Reply kindly and meekly to a harsh or bitter word. To act thus is to submit yourself to the will of God, who has forbidden vengeance. To act thus is to imitate My example, that is, My meekness and humility.

“Yes, My daughter, instead of giving way to anger seek to be reconciled that same day with him who has offended you ; instead of doing him any evil do him good ; instead of hating him give him proofs of your love. Never speak against him, and always take up his defence.

“But do not hope to succeed in subduing your feelings by yourself and unaided. To subdue yourself you must be strong ; to practise self-possession at every moment of the day you must be powerful ; to conquer yourself every day of your life you need a strength and a power above your own. Have recourse, then, to God, My daughter, beg Him to grant you calmness, tranquillity, peace, whenever you feel yourself most provoked to anger, and He will hearken to you.”

12. *Of sloth.*

“My daughter, the last of the capital vices is sloth. There are two kinds of sloth : sloth of the mind and sloth of the body.

“The sloth of the mind may also be understood in two ways : in that which concerns the affairs of salvation, and in that which concerns the intellectual labours of the temporal life.

“The sloth of the mind, which makes a man neglect the affairs of salvation, which paralyses him as regards spiritual and supernatural good, is the most dangerous

of all, because it leads directly to the loss of salvation and to hell.

“The sloth of the mind, which makes a man neglect to occupy his intelligence with useful things or serious works, is also very dangerous, because a mind that is not occupied naturally tends to evil ; it follows the inclination of its nature, because there is nothing to stop it in its rapid descent.

“The mind may be slothful even when the body is active, or it may be occupied with bad, culpable, sinful thoughts, and thus do evil.

“The sloth of the body consists in being habitually idle, in not working as the duties of its state require, and remaining inactive. This sloth is dangerous, and also leads to sin, because an idle man is surrounded with a thousand temptations which he is unable to resist because he is not employed.

“Bodily inaction is not so dangerous as that of the mind. There are persons, in fact, who cannot employ themselves in manual labour, but are able to work with their intellect. To them inaction of the body is not a vice or a sin, because the noblest part of them is at work and is not given up to idleness.

“Fly sloth, My daughter, which would prevent you working for your salvation ; occupy yourself continually with this affair, the most important and the most profitable, and let all your actions tend towards that end.

“Fly sloth of mind, it is the parent of all sorts of evil. Nothing has any effect on a slothful mind : neither exhortations, nor reproaches, nor threats, nor promises ; all is useless, it sleeps the sleep of inaction and of death.

“Fly sloth of body : labour is a penance, labour is

a blessing, labour prolongs life, while sloth, on the contrary, arrests and suspends it. What would become of the labourer if he did not till his field? Would he not die of hunger?

“Habituate yourself from your earliest years to labour, you will always rejoice at having borne this yoke in your youth. All ought to work; it is the sentence passed on the first man and on all his descendants; the rich man ought to superintend the administration of his goods, the poor man ought to earn his daily bread. Each, in his own vocation, ought to fulfil the duties which are incumbent on him.

“That you may fly sloth, My daughter, consider how hateful it is to the Lord, who condemns* the unprofitable servant to exterior darkness. Consider that, if you sow nothing, you will reap nothing. Consider that life is short, and that a few years are not too many for meriting Heaven. Consider that all the saints in Heaven attained their reward only by labour. Consider that manual labour provides for the support of the natural life, and that intellectual labour refreshes the heart and the mind. Consider, finally, that I Myself came upon earth to give you the example of labour, that I earned My daily bread by the sweat of My brow,† and that I won the glory of Heaven by My toils, My Passion, and My Cross. Follow My example, My daughter; be always occupied, like Me, in glorifying My Father, always occupied with your own soul; never remain idle. When you have nothing to do, think of God, think of Me, think of My Passion, and you will be usefully employed.

* St. Matthew xxv. 30.

† St. Mark vi. 3.

“Flee all these vices, My daughter ; flee them with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength. Vice is the inclination to evil.

“Love virtue with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength. Virtue is the inclination to good, the love of truth, the power which attaches to God.

“Be ever tending towards Him, be always attached to Him, and you will find in Him rest, peace and happiness.”

Love everlasting to the Saviour Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

B O O K X I.

OF RELATIONS.

Glory and praise, love and thanksgiving be rendered unceasingly to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost for ever and ever. Amen.

1. *Divers kinds of relations ; general relations of a man with his neighbour ; of propriety in relations of life ; propriety regarding self, and in respect to others.*

THE Saviour Jesus was pleased to mould me by His instructions after the pattern of His wisdom. How happy should I be did I but profit by His words ! There is no truth which it is useful to know, no instructions profitable for the life of time or of Eternity, which this God, so good, so lovable, so loving and so little loved, did not impart to me. This is, if my memory serves, pretty nearly what He said to me concerning the relations of life :—

“ My daughter, the life of man upon earth is only one successive and continuous series of relations. They exist between man and man, between man and angel, between man and his Saviour, between man and his God.

"I have already spoken to you of the relations between man and angel, between man and the Trinity; I wish now to speak to you of the relations between man and his neighbour, and of the relations between man and the Son of God, as Saviour and Redeemer.

"The relations between man and man are either general or intimate.

"General relations require you to observe propriety of behaviour towards all men, and to treat every one with respect, so that you may be yourself respected. Propriety in regard to relations with your neighbour consists, as the term imports, in conducting yourself well wherever you are, that is to say, behaving always in a manner conformable to the spirit of religion which is the universal rule of good.

"To observe propriety in a perfect manner, you ought to observe it in everything which concerns yourself, and also in everything which concerns your neighbour.

"Now, My daughter, propriety in regard to yourself includes the comportment and postures of your body, the way in which you hold your head, the expression of your countenance, your laugh, your looks, your speech and your silence.

"Propriety of behaviour is perfect among the perfect. I Myself, My daughter, when I was on earth, observed this propriety in all the respects which I have just specified, and I observed them in a perfect manner because I am all-perfect. You ought, then, to keep Me constantly before your eyes that you may ever follow My example and walk always in My footsteps.

"Look at Me, and I will teach you to hold yourself erect without affectation or constraint, without bending

or stooping; this would be an index either of the feebleness or the carelessness of your mind. Look at Me, and I will teach you not to be ever turning yourself on this side and on that, like a leaf at every breath of wind; that would be a sign of the levity of your mind. Look at Me, and I will teach you, when you are seated, not to loll or incline luxuriously and indolently; this would be a sign of the slothfulness of your mind. Look at Me, and I will teach you never to assume a scornful, haughty, and disdainful air; this would be a sign of the pride of your heart. Look at Me, and I will teach you not to be ever turning your head this way and that way, not to laugh loudly and frequently, but to let your countenance always wear an expression of sweetness, humility, and modesty, never looking stiffly and coldly at any one, but composing your features so that they may always be the mirror of a pure and virtuous heart.

“Yes, My daughter, have always a countenance open, calm, full of kindness, gentleness and amenity, which, by reflecting a frank and sincere piety, may gain all hearts and incline them to God.

“Above all, it is in your words and conversation that you ought to observe a becoming behaviour.

“The first condition is to speak little. He who speaks little is wise and prudent, and preserves his soul from a thousand embarrassments. He who speaks little edifies by his modesty, maintains his personal dignity, and also keeps himself more easily attached to God, because he practises detachment from self.

“The second condition is to abstain from everything which ought to be avoided in conversation; namely, from raillery, disputes, contentions, detraction,

calumny, falsehood ; worldly, idle, and altogether useless discourse ; eagerness, pretentiousness, captiousness, self-sufficiency and arrogance.

“The third condition is to speak always in a manner conformable to what is good, true, and just, with affability, modesty, gentleness and charity.

“Thus, My daughter, speak little ; yet never affect melancholy or excessive silence. Speak when necessity, charity, or civility requires, but look to your intentions, and never speak through self-love or to please the world. If you are obliged to speak to any one, offer your words to God, and beseech Him to preserve you from sin. If you desire to speak for your own pleasure, hold your peace ; if to complain, again be silent ; silence is preferable, sometimes even obligatory, in such case. If you desire to speak in order to unburden your heart, let it be only with a select few, pious persons who love virtue ; in short, always speak profitably and holily ; thus shall you observe propriety of behaviour.

“Propriety as regards your neighbour consists in rendering him all the duties of charity in your power when you are with him ; bearing with his faults, and pardoning all that is defective in him. Propriety demands that you should sacrifice your tastes, inclinations, and will, to follow the tastes, inclinations, and will of your neighbour in all that is not contrary to the law of God ; and this without contention, with kindness, and in a natural way ; and that you should forestall his wants and necessities, in order to do him service or to please him. Propriety of behaviour also requires that you should patiently endure all the defects and infirmities of your neighbour, whether they be of the body or the temper, of the mind or of

the heart. Thus mutually to support and aid each other, My daughter, is to practise the highest and most perfect propriety of behaviour, because it is the fulfilling of My law."

2. *Intimate relations ; of friendship ; divers kinds of friendship : good friendships, unprofitable friendships, dangerous friendships, criminal friendships, obligatory friendships.*

"Intimate relations, My daughter, subsist between two friends, two betrothed, two married persons, between parents and children, master and servant.

"It is the property of the heart to love. The heart would seem to be made of love, for it must necessarily attach itself to something. However wicked or savage a man may be, his heart will impel him nevertheless to attach himself to something or somebody ; he has a heart, and therefore he must love, from the very nature of that heart. I am not speaking now of the love which is a precept God has given to man that he should love his neighbour, and love him as he loves himself in God and for God ; I mean that intimate and affectionate love which is called friendship, and which necessarily implies a return of love on the part of the person beloved.

"This love of friendship is not due from a man to his neighbour ; and, indeed, it is not general but particular. There are different degrees of it, as there are several different kinds of friendship.

"There are good friendships and unprofitable friendships, permissible friendships and dangerous friendships, criminal friendships and obligatory friendships.

I will instruct you concerning these, and you will then better understand what I have to say to you on the various intimate relations of life.

“Friendship is a sentiment of the heart produced by the esteem which is felt for a person ; a man loves what he esteems, as he hates what he despises. When the esteem is according to God, the friendship produced by this esteem is always good. When it is according to the world, the friendship is at least unprofitable. I will tell you in what case it is culpable.

“Friendship, My daughter, is always good when it is according to God. For it has God for its principle, and it also has God for its end. It has God for its principle ; consequently, it is He who has inspired it by the mutual virtue of the two friends, or by the virtue of one of the two, who, through this sentiment of friendship, will recall to the path of virtue him whom he loves and by whom he is loved. It has God for its end ; these two friends love each other only that they may both enjoy some day the vision of God, by doing what God enjoins to this end, and persevering in the practice of good. Yes, My daughter, this friendship is good, firm, solid, constant, because it rests upon God.

“Friendship is always unprofitable when it depends on the world. What, in fact, is the ground of this friendship ? Material, temporal, or worldly advantages, wit, wealth, or beauty. Now all this is vanity ; it is but so much loose sand which whirls about and falls again to the earth. How many who were friends according to the world have later become irreconcilable enemies ! There was, therefore, no true friendship there.

“It is permissible for a young man and a young woman to be united together in friendship with a view to a just and lawful marriage. But that this friendship may be good and lasting, it must not be grounded on wealth, agreeable manners, talent, or beauty ; for these things are not a solid ground of friendship. On the contrary, it must rest solely on God, in order to their forming for ever one flesh and one spirit, one heart and one soul.

“There are dangerous friendships ; these are friendships between persons of different sex. They may be good and innocent, but they are always dangerous, on account of the perverse inclination of corrupt nature and the continual efforts of Satan, who is ever seeking to seduce into evil. In these friendships, therefore, it is needful to use much circumspection, vigilance and prudence, for sometimes that which is good becomes bad, and that which is innocent becomes culpable and criminal.

“A young woman ought to be ever watchful of her eyes and ears, which are the doors through which the devil most often enters in. She ought to be most watchful of her eyes, in order to fly from the infernal serpent as soon as she perceives him ; she ought to be watchful of her ears, in order to fly from the infernal serpent as soon as she hears his hissings at a distance. Consequently, when she sees that an affection is tending to the weakening or the ruin of her virtue, she ought immediately to renounce it, were it as dear to her as the apple of her eye. A young woman ought always to keep her interior constant in the practice of good, and make her exterior conformable to her interior. Her interior will be good if it is pure, innocent, and far removed from every thought, every

imagination, that is unbefitting or improper. Her exterior will be good if in her behaviour, her dress, her looks, and her words she keeps clear of everything which might be prejudicial to modesty and purity. This modesty ought to be genuine, and not false and deceitful, so that it may not become a snare all the more dangerous because it hides a corrupt heart under the veil of hypocrisy.

“The young man must be like the young woman. He must be watchful of his eyes, that he may not fall into temptation to evil ; of his tongue, that he may not teach it to another ; of his ears, that he may not learn it himself.

“Nothing that is unclean will ever enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ; nothing that is defiled can form a good friendship.

“There are criminal friendships. I will say nothing to you about them, My daughter. They are known to every one. But be assured of this, that the malediction of God will fall on those depraved young persons whose heart is the slave of their passions, and has become viler than a filthy dung-hill ; on those married persons who break the sacred ties which bind them together ; on those old men, bending under the weight of years, who, with one foot in the grave, dwell on the memory of their past shameful life with undiminished zest and desire ; and on those who, having of their own free will consecrated to Me their body and their soul, fear not to profane them by sacrilegious acts of iniquity.

“Finally, there are obligatory friendships. A father and mother are bound to love their children, as a child is bound to love its father and its mother. So also married persons are bound to love each other in a

manner altogether special, and by this love bind still closer their marriage ties."

3. *Relations between two friends.*

"Intimate relations all rest on friendship. Now, as all intimate relations ought to be good, all friendships likewise ought to be good.

"I have already said, My daughter, that the first intimate relation is between two friends.

"Nothing, My daughter, is to be compared to a true friend, a faithful friend. Now, My daughter, there is no true friend among the wicked, and the most virtuous man is the best friend. You must, therefore, choose your friends, and choose them from among a thousand. A man comes to resemble him with whom he associates, with whom he constantly lives, and to whom he speaks in the sincerity of his heart; that is to say, his friend: whence the proverb: 'Tell me with whom you associate, and I will tell you what you are';* it is full of truth.

"How many unhappy youths have been ruined, corrupted by a friend who has himself been corrupted! How many young girls will deplore all their life the loss of their virtue through friends who enticed them into ways that led to their corruption! How many husbands and wives have been estranged from each other by bad friends, who were the cause of their disunion and separation!

* "*Dis-moi qui tu fréquentes, je te dirai qui tu es*," or, as it runs in English: "Tell me with whom thou goest, and I will tell thee what thou doest."

“Friendship, My daughter, is formed and maintained by similarity of sentiments. Where sentiments are opposed, either friendship must be broken or sentiments become similar. When one friend is good and the other bad, the bad must become good or the good become bad.

“When, therefore, you see that your friendship is being sought, ascertain, before you bestow it, what are the habits and conduct of the person who asks for your friendship. Observe if she be gentle, modest, discreet, industrious, obedient to her parents, pious ; if she be so, you may love her ; nevertheless, still delay awhile before you open your heart to her, in order to be better assured that her qualities are genuine, and thus spare yourself much trouble and disquietude in the future. When you have proved her, and convinced yourself of her fidelity, modesty, prudence, charity, and all her other virtues, then you may unite yourself to her in the bonds of a friendship which has the love of God for its principle. Encourage each other by word and example to advance more and more in goodness and perfection. If the one stumble, let the other raise her up ; comfort your friend if she is sad, be cheerful if she is cheerful, and rejoice together with her.

“If, on the contrary, she is a person who loves the world, its vanities, amusements, feastings, pleasures, joys and follies ; if you see that she loves detraction, calumny, falsehood, that she is given to levity, and is little disposed to piety, avoid her, My daughter, and seek not her society.

“Nevertheless, it is not always good to shun, avoid, or give up those who are thus light-minded and fond of the world. For if the bad lead away the good, the

good also sometimes bring back the bad. However, for this your virtue must be firm and solid, you must have a great confidence in God, and not rely on yourself, but hope all from Him. But if the good one feels her goodness growing weak, and her friend's levity or perversity exercising an evil influence over her, she must immediately break with her, that she may not become bad herself. You may, then, from a motive of charity, My daughter, endeavour to gain the friendship of a young person whom you see carried away in the world's current. You may speak a few good words to her with a view of inspiring her with good sentiments. In doing this, watch her behaviour, see whether she cordially receives the advances you make to her, or whether she sneers and scoffs at religion, and turns it into ridicule. If all seems well, you may go further, but discreetly and prudently. In speaking to her of what is evil, do not allude to it as though she herself had any part in it, this would displease her; and in speaking of goodness, do not say that you have observed no signs of it in her, this would discourage her. Proceed gradually and slowly, but do the work solidly. However good her sentiments may be, under the influence of your example and friendship, do not disclose to her all the secrets of the interior life with God, but make them known to her only so far as her needs require or she evinces a hunger and thirst for them.

“If, on the contrary, she is repelled by what you say, or does not respond to your good intentions, wait a while, pray for her, but do not make her your constant companion; she might by her banterings give you a distaste for religion and make you worse than herself; then, when you perceive a favourable

moment profit by it, return to the charge, and make another attempt. However bad a person may be, she will understand and take in good part such a zealous act of charity. Sometimes she would wish to abandon herself to your guidance, follow the impulse you give her, listen to what you say, walk after your example, open her heart to you, and lay it bare before you : this would be a satisfaction to her soul, she would then be calm, happy, and tranquil ; but she is held back by a secret force, she does not venture to do it, but keeps the burden on her heart, oppressing and stifling it. What must be done ? you must get a deeper entrance into her heart, touch it at its most sensitive part, so as to bring her to say, ‘ You are right and I am wrong ’ ; from that moment the thing would be done. But, My daughter, this is a very hard and difficult matter ; you have need of an extraordinary succour of grace. You ought, therefore, to pray much in such a case, neglect no means, avail yourself of every moment of which you can make use, multiply yourself in some sort, weary and even exhaust yourself to save that soul.

“ This, My daughter, is the mark of a true friendship. The sacrifices, pains, sufferings, contradictions, sallies of temper, difficulties of all kinds do not repel a true friend, because he who truly loves, loves in God and for God : such friendship is strong and lasting, and endures everything. It is stronger than death. Such friendship is not subject to changes, it is not punctilious, it does not break down for a trifle, a little remissness, an inattention. It is not founded on fortune, on beauty, wit, or intelligence ; it is founded on virtue, it rests on God. Such ought to be the relations between two real friends.”

4. *Relations between two betrothed persons.*

"The second relation is between two persons who are betrothed.

"Marriage, My daughter, is a holy state instituted by God: consequently, there is nothing in it which is opposed to purity or chastity, and neither chastity nor purity is lost in the state of marriage, where there is fear and love of God. This is why Heaven counts so many saints, both men and women, who have sanctified themselves in the married state, and who consequently have not lost their purity. Virginity, it is true, is a more perfect state, a state of much greater purity and chastity, but it is not the natural state of men, it is that of angels, whom one who observes it comes to resemble. Hence this state cannot be recommended generally to every one; it can be the state only of the few.

"The marriage state is a holy state, and consequently it is pleasing to God, who is the God of holiness. But most frequently marriage is a state in which persons do not sanctify themselves, because they do not bring to it the proper dispositions.

"I will now speak of these dispositions before and after marriage.

"The first disposition before entering that state is to be called thereto, to have a vocation. A young person who desires to marry must well examine her vocation and what the state is to which she is called, that, after having embraced it, she may be able to bear the troubles incidental thereto by the thought: It was the will of God. She ought to beware of entering that state thoughtlessly or from caprice, and still less from passion, but solely because it is the

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vocation which God has given her. When, therefore, she has ascertained her vocation, and has maturely reflected on it, she ought to beg God to make known to her the person to whom she is to be united, who is to be her support during life, and to whom she is to give her heart. If she asks this of God with faith and a sincere desire of knowing His divine will, God will hearken to her and grant her prayer. Not that He will send her an angel for this purpose, but He will deal with her nevertheless in such a way that she will be able to have a moral certainty that her prayer has been heard. He will not send her an angel, but He will make use of her family, which has special graces for directing her in the choice she ought to make of her spouse, or He will make use of a friend of her family, who will arrange everything according to His secret and impenetrable designs. Sometimes also He will not make use of her family, because their views may not be upright, virtuous, and disinterested, but grounded on mere nature and reason, which look rather to earth than to Heaven. He will not make use of any intermediary, but will Himself enlighten the mind of that young person ; He will show her the prudence, modesty, discretion of him whom He reserves for her, and her choice will by this perception be fixed irrevocably. Then, after fresh and still maturer consideration, it will be her duty to adhere to this choice, in spite of any obstacles which may arise, reckoning on the grace of God to remove them, and placing her entire confidence in Him.

“Then, for fear of any illusion on her part, this young woman, being aware of the reciprocal wishes and feelings of the person whom she has chosen, and believes to be destined for her by God, will inform her parents and

her director. She will inform her parents, on account of the respect and obedience she owes them, and in order to learn their views upon the subject. She will inform her director, in order to obtain his counsel and advice. It would be well that in this case her confessor, who knows her thoroughly by means of her confessions, should also be her director. This, however, is not necessary, and in some respects it is better on occasions that it should not be the confessor, for in such a matter she ought to consult a prudent, wise, circumspect, and enlightened man, in whom she has confidence, with whom she can speak quite at her ease, and who is qualified to treat an affair of so much importance in a judicious manner. When she has received the director's advice, as I have just said, it is her duty to follow it and put it into execution, as being the expression of the will of God. The advice of the director, which is always disinterested and consequently better considered, ought to be preferred to the lights of her own judgment or the ideas entertained by her family.

“When her choice has been approved, let her bestow her love from that moment on the object of her choice, let her pledge him her troth, and never withdraw from him either her troth or her heart. With this view, let her not fix her eye on others and seek to make a fresh choice. The first is according to God: the second might be according to sin and the devil.

“In her first interviews with him whom she has chosen, a young woman ought to keep guard over her eyes, remembering that the eyes are the principal doors by which the impure spirit gains entrance. She ought to keep them strictly in restraint, not only for her own sake but also for his. She ought also to

guard carefully her words, but not to excess ; a too great reserve might be ill-construed and taken for disdain, coldness, or as a formal refusal. She must avoid, therefore, both too much freedom and too much reserve. Let her manner be amiable, gentle, courteous, becoming, frank, affectionate, and let everything about her breathe the sweet perfume of My grace and of modesty. Let everything in her behaviour show that she is entering the married state, not from caprice or passion, but to do the will of God, who has given her that vocation.

“The first interviews should never be private, but always in presence of relatives ; they should be sufficiently frequent in order that the two future partners for life may know each other and through this mutual knowledge learn to love each other ; but they should not be too much prolonged by idle and useless discourse. Their conversation ought never to be accompanied with unbecoming, indelicate, or criminal language. They ought to banish from their conversation, not only all that is contrary to modesty, but all that is opposed to the law of God : detraction, calumny, falsehood, jealousy, and a thousand other forbidden things. Their discourse, on the contrary, ought to be on the part of both such as serves to edification and inspires mutual respect.

“When they see each other alone, it ought never to be in a solitary place, but where they can easily be seen ; and let the interview be short and soon ended.

“A young person ought to show herself amiable and affectionate to her future husband, but she ought never to allow of flattering endearments or any kind of familiarity. She ought to have ever before her eyes the law of God, propriety, and duty. Such

conduct, at once engaging, cordial, and respectful, will merit for her both the affection and the reverence of her husband.

- “When the parties have gained a sufficient knowledge of each other, it is prudent to conclude the marriage at once, and not to delay it too long. Such delay might be an occasion of sin. Also, to fortify each other, and to beg of God the grace they need in order to remain ever upright and holy till their marriage is solemnised, they will do well to unite themselves to Me from time to time in the Sacrament of My Love.

“The advice I have given is both for young men and young women.

“A young man ought to seek and desire for his wife one who is modest, pious, and virtuous. If he find her she will make him happy, and they will sanctify themselves in the state they have both embraced. Let him not seek for beauty: beauty passes away more swiftly than the flower of the fields. What would there remain to him in his wife if she had only beauty, and this beauty shortly disappeared? Let him not seek only fortune: fortune does not bring virtue, or peace, or tranquillity, or happiness, into a family. Let him not seek only intelligence and aptness for the things of earth; rather let him seek intelligence and aptness for the things of Heaven. Let him not seek marriage for the satisfaction of passion! Woe to the wife of such a man! He is a man only in name; in reality he is a devil and a brute beast.”

5. *Relations between two married persons.*

“Married persons ought to love each other, and by

this mutual love bind more and more closely the bonds which unite them. They ought not to live like pagans. They are the children of the saints, and ought therefore to observe the rules and the laws which their state imposes on them. They ought to observe the chastity and continence which their condition prescribes, and not abuse the liberty which is allowed them ; for liberty in this state, as in every state, is liberty for good and not for evil and impurity. How many have been damned for sins committed in the married state, who would have been saved if they had submitted to the rules laid down for them ! In such persons there is no true love, no love founded on God, but a sinful and criminal love, founded only on the flesh, which drags men into sin.

“The love of two married persons ought to be genuine and founded on God, that it may be constant and enduring. They ought to maintain an inviolable fidelity to each other and beware lest any alien affection come to sever bonds so sacred. They ought to excite each other to the performance of their duties, the perfect fulfilment of which will be their happiness here below and in the life to come. They ought to assist, support and console each other, rejoice together, and form but one heart and one soul.

“A Christian wife ought to watch carefully over the fruit of her womb, and be fearful of endangering its life by any fault of hers, and thus robbing it of the greatest happiness by depriving it of baptism. A child not baptised will never see God. Such a misfortune ought to make a mother inconsolable. Yet, how many unhappy women are there who by their levity, their avarice, their fits of temper, their excess in eating, stifle the fruit of their womb !

‘A Christian wife ought to make special prayer to God that He would preserve her child from any such misfortune, and take all the precautions which prudence and forethought may prescribe. She ought even before its birth to offer it to God and beg Him to watch over it. She ought also to guard well her child after its birth, and bestow upon it all the care which her maternal love will inspire and its helplessness demands. As soon as the tongue of her child begins to be unloosed and its senses to be developed, she will teach it to know God and imprint the love of Him upon its tender heart. She will impart to it early a relish for piety and virtue, will teach it to do everything with a view of pleasing God, and never cease throughout its life encompassing it with her maternal solicitude.

“Christian parents will always govern their children by reason and not by caprice ; reproving, exhorting, or correcting them when they believe it to be opportune and necessary, in order to prevent their contracting bad habits, which it is impossible subsequently to eradicate. This forming to piety and virtue will make their children increase in all that is good, and they will become the joy and crown of their parents.

“Finally, My daughter, when one of two married persons is united to another who is without virtue and religion he must beg God’s forgiveness, and offer in expiation all that he has to suffer. He must take upon himself all the duties which would naturally devolve upon them both in respect to the direction of the children, that they may be good and virtuous. The good one ought to endeavour to bring back to better sentiments the partner who is without virtue, and to this end pray much, pray without ceasing, pray with confidence, and the hope of being heard.”

6. Of the relations between parents and children.

“The relations between a father and mother and their children ought to be very intimate. The father and mother live again in their children, the children derive their life from their father and mother after God : can there be a relationship more intimate? These relations ought to have as their principle, on the part of both one and the other, the strongest and warmest love. Whom can a father and mother love if they love not their own children? and whom can a child love if he does not love his father and mother? All hearts in a family ought to be in union with each other, and have but one sentiment and one will. They ought all to work for their common good, assist each other, and support each other. A father and mother ought to protect, shield, and support their children as long as they are under age ; and in after life children ought to maintain and protect their parents according to their ability. Their relations with each other ought to endure all through life and even beyond the grave. The child ought to remember the trouble, the suffering, the labour, the care he caused his parents when he was not able to provide for his own subsistence ; he ought to remember the womb that bore him, the bosom that nourished him, the solicitude with which his mother tended him, that in his turn he may give his parents the labour of his youth and the submission he owes to the authors of his being. He ought to give his father and mother every testimony of his love; he must not afflict his father by his vices or rebellion, and make his mother weep by his irregular and irreligious life.

“Woe to the children who sadden the latter days of

their parents! Woe, above all, to those children who draw down on their heads the malediction of their dying father and mother. Woe also to the parents who have no heart for their children, who neglect them from their infancy, and do not guide them in the path of virtue! But blessed are the families that live in peace and unity; the eye of God rests upon them with complacency."

7. *Relations between superiors and inferiors.*

"Finally, My daughter, there are relations less intimate, but which ought nevertheless to have a certain degree of intimacy: they are those which subsist between superior and inferior, master and servant.

"These relations are very difficult to observe and maintain as they ought to be.

"Ordinarily, they will always be good if the superior or master treats his inferiors as he ought to treat them. If the superior or master has charity, that is to say, if he is kind without partiality, mild without laxity, condescending without weakness, firm without sternness, he will assuredly win the affection, the esteem, and the respect of those who are under him. But if a superior show preferences he will excite jealousy; if he is lax he will encourage disorders; if he is violent and impatient, he will repel, and the behaviour of his inferiors will be modelled on his own.

"A superior ought to be forgiving to his inferior, but with prudence and discretion. To this end, he ought to observe the disposition, spirit, and temper of his inferior; he ought to strengthen the weak by encouragement, to be mild and affable, that he may

win hearts, but at the same time sedate, in order not to excite contempt.

“He ought to regard himself as the representative of God to his inferiors, and act towards them as he would wish God to act towards him when he comes to be judged. This prudent, well-ordered, charitable, and virtuous conduct on the part of superiors will exercise an influence on that of their inferiors, and introduce among them the most agreeable and friendly relations. They will feel that they are all brethren, and will understand how sweet it is for brethren to live united in God and for God.

“Such, My daughter, are the relations of men with one another.”

8. *The followers of the Lamb without spot.*

Here is what the Saviour gave me to see and understand, and what He said to me, respecting His relations with souls. They are more intimate than all other relations, and are founded on His union with souls, a union that is marvellous and incomprehensible, but full of truth and more perfect than any union of creatures with each other, since it is the union of the creature with the Divinity.

He spoke to me on the very peculiar relations existing between Him and the souls which are specially consecrated to Him by virginity, which have chosen Him for their Spouse, and celebrated their nuptials with the Lamb on the day when from the bottom of their hearts they said to Him: “O Saviour Jesus, I am ravished with Thy beauty, I have chosen Thee for my Bridegroom, vouchsafe to accept me also for Thy spouse.”

I will relate with all simplicity what I experienced, and the manner of it.

One day, after Holy Communion, I was adoring the Saviour Jesus in my heart, when I saw before me a beautiful valley which the Saviour showed me. "My daughter," said Jesus to me, "go across this valley, and ascend to the plain that stretches above it." I immediately obeyed. On either side of the valley I observed, at intervals, magnificent trees whose leaves shone like pearls. Between each tree there stood a sentinel; they wore no military uniform and carried no musket. All had their arms crossed on their breast; they stood erect, and looked up to Heaven. I saw them alternately cast their eyes on me and then lift them up to Heaven.

I was not afraid, and continued on my way. Soon I reached the entrance of the valley. An immense wall had been raised on each side, and these two walls were joined by steps of stone about twelve feet in length, three in depth, and one in height. On each wall I saw figures of lions, elephants, and bulls.

On reaching the highest step I beheld a vast plain entirely surrounded with walls, and in the middle of the plain a magnificent palace. An iron railing prevented my passing into this plain, but suddenly it opened, turning on the pavement, which was of finely polished stone. I passed through, and the gate immediately closed again. I crossed the plain all alone; the doors of the palace were shut, and it seemed to me to be inhabited. I found myself a prisoner, and did not know what would befall me. Nevertheless I felt happy, thinking I was about to

die there, and fly up to Heaven. "Lord," I cried, "come to my assistance, make haste to succour me, and deliver my soul. Lord, have pity on me ; turn Thyself towards me, O my God, and look favourably upon me. Wilt Thou forget Thy humble servant, O Jesus ; and how long wilt Thou hide from me the sight of Thy glory ? O Jerusalem, holy Sion, how blessed are they who live within thy precincts ! as for me, I bemoan myself here as an exile, a poor prisoner. O Lord Jesus, wilt Thou not hearken to the voice of Thy servant ?"

Then a voice issued from the palace, and said : "Who is she who stands without and calls upon Me ?" "Lord," I replied, "Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest the most secret thoughts of men, Thou hast numbered the hairs of my head, Thou knowest that the voice Thou hast heard is the voice of Thy servant Marie." Then I fell on my knees with my face to the ground.

The gates of the palace opened, and, rising, I beheld a multitude of virgins, having crowns on their heads and palms in their hands. Jesus was in the midst of them, surpassing all in His splendour and His beauty. Seeing them approaching me, I cried : "Lord, I am only a poor sinner, I am not worthy to appear before Thee." Jesus drew near to me, and I said : "Thy beauty is above all beauty and Thy glory above all glory." Then I became beautiful like the other virgins, who put a crown on my head and a palm in my hand, and I took my place in their ranks. All now returned into the palace singing a canticle of sweetest melody, in which they promised Jesus that they would ever love Him, and follow Him whithersoever He should go.

9. *The graces which Jesus bestows on souls who choose Him for their Spouse ; of the soul espoused to Jesus, and of the love of that soul for Jesus her Spouse.*

One day I was about to have the happiness of receiving Holy Communion, when I heard the voice of the Saviour saying to me : " How I long to enter into your heart, My daughter, to give you the graces I have prepared for you ! " As for me, I say it to my confusion, instead of being filled with love and gratitude to so good a God, I seemed to be without any feeling of affection for Him ; my heart nevertheless retained a most sweet impression from His words. After communicating I entered into my heart, and bent my knee before Jesus, whom I found seated as a master and a sovereign. He gave me no sign of tenderness, not even one of those glances, so full of sweetness, which penetrate to the very depth of the soul. I did not venture to raise my eyes towards Him. I remained in silence at His feet, esteeming myself only too happy that He should be pleased to bear with me, making a sacrifice of the desire I had to participate in His sweet favours, and confessing how unworthy I was of them. It was not long before I felt myself gently drawn towards Him. Addressing Himself to His Father, He said : " My Father, send to her the Holy Spirit. Shed down upon this child Thy most abundant graces, Thou knowest My designs concerning her, look not upon her merits but only upon Mine." Then, regarding me with an eye full of kindness, He said : " Offer thyself in sacrifice to God My Father, as I offered Myself in the Temple in the arms of My Mother." I did as He bade me, and it seemed to me that God shed

down upon me His grace and the sweetness of His Spirit.

After this, I saw a person clothed in white coming towards me. I took him for an angel. This is what I witnessed, and these are the thoughts that came at the same time into my mind. The angel took a great chain of gold which was attached to the girdle of Jesus and, without saying a single word to me, fastened it by one end to my girdle, passing between two rings of the chain a padlock, which he locked with a golden key. He also attached my hands and my feet to the Hands and Feet of Jesus in like manner, but with smaller chains ; and I said to myself : " These chains are a figure of the charity which ought to unite me to God in all my actions."

Then the angel brought a robe of shining whiteness, but of very simple material, and clothed me therewith. I said to myself : " This robe is a figure of the innocence and simplicity which ought to be in me."

The angel also put on me a red mantle, which he crossed over my breast ; and I said to myself : " This is a figure of the sufferings I shall have to endure, but on which I must not let my mind dwell."

After this, the angel threw over my shoulders a superb vesture, the colours of which I could not describe, so various and so beautiful were they. It was enriched with magnificent embroidery in gold, very wide, and secured on my bosom by a golden clasp. I said to myself : " This is a figure of charity."

In the middle of this vesture I observed a very large white ribbon, the end of which was held by the Blessed Virgin. Mary advanced towards me, and, passing the ribbon three times round my neck, arranged it very gracefully. I said to myself : " This

is a figure of the pure and tender devotion which you ought to have for Mary."

The angel then combed my hair, and let it fall dishevelled on my shoulders; and I said to myself: "This figures to you the spirit of penance which you ought to have." He left my feet bare; and I said to myself: "This figures to you the complete detachment you ought to have from all things." He washed my feet, my hands, and my face, and they became of a dazzling whiteness, and the water he had used was sprinkled on my head. I said to myself: "This is a figure of the purity of intention which is necessary in all actions." Next, he put a crown of thorns upon my head, a poor and simple cross in my hand, and before my eyes a lance and a sword, whose edges were stained with blood, which he wiped and dipped in water. I said to myself: "This crown and this cross figure to you the suffering you are to endure; this lance and sword represent to you, not the blood you shall shed, but the tears you shall let fall, or, rather, the pains you shall suffer, not in your body, but in your soul." Then he covered me with a large black veil, and he also covered half the lance and sword with the veil; and I said to myself: "The sword and the lance thus half-hidden figure to you your sufferings, which shall be half-hidden, and the veil represents the humility with which you ought to be clothed all your life long."

Then Jesus said to me: "My daughter, be happy; I choose you for My spouse. Let this title be dearer to you than that of queen: I am your Beloved. Never share your heart, then, with any creature. Whom could you find more beautiful, more loving, more wealthy, more powerful, more perfect than Me? Who,

then, deserves, who has the right, to be My rival? Say to men: 'I am a virgin, and I would rather bear this title and pass my life in misery than by losing it become a queen.' Or, again: 'Jesus is my Beloved, He hath chosen me to be His spouse; I am not worthy of it, but I will prefer no one to Him.' A virgin who is truly a virgin is humble and gentle, modesty is in her eyes, her ears, her words; she avoids familiarity with persons of the other sex, she does not desire a soft and easy life, she loves labour, mortification, recollection, retirement, and prayer; in her attire she avoids studied adornment as much as untidiness; she dresses in a manner suitable to her rank and condition; she is detached from everything, she does not pamper her body, she regards it as a prison, she respects it as the temple in which her Spouse comes to dwell; she groans and languishes in her exile, she sighs to behold her Spouse, and she has no consolation on earth save when she receives Him into her heart in Holy Communion.

"A virgin who has chosen Me as her Spouse is like that servant in the Gospel* who is always watching and holds himself ready for the coming of his master. She is like a wife who truly loves her husband, who is sad and dull when he is absent, expects his return with impatience, is ever listening to catch the sound of his footsteps, does not leave home or visit her friends for fear of not being at hand to welcome him; never closes her eyes in sleep, or slumbers but lightly, not to let her husband knock long at the door; rises the moment she hears his voice, goes forward to meet him, and, all transported with joy, embraces him, saying: 'How long you have been away! How dull I

* St. Luke xii. 36-38.

have been without you ! I have been impatiently expecting your return, and have not slept lest I should make you wait long.' The husband is touched at seeing so much love on the part of his wife, and gives her presents he has brought for her to make up for the pain his absence has caused her.

"The wife also devotes all her care to her husband ; she is full of pleasing ways and attentions ; her eyes are always towards him to guess, if possible, his desires and his will, that she may execute them immediately. The husband, My daughter, is not indifferent to these tokens of his wife's affection, he renders her love for love, and consults her pleasure in everything. His absences become less frequent and prolonged. He disposes his affairs so that he may always remain with her and never be parted from her.

"I am the Husband, My daughter. Do you entertain for Me the sentiments of that wife of whom I have been speaking ? Have you the same joy in your heart when you see Me coming ? You have not, and I do not require it from you ; but what I do require of you is that you should always watch over yourself, that you should always be attentive to follow the attraction and inspiration of My grace when it is given you, and to accomplish My slightest will. Such a disposition of your heart will attach you to Me more and more, unite you more closely to Me, make you grow in that perfection to which I call all such souls as give themselves to Me, and I will lavish upon you My richest and most precious favours ; and I will make you taste the sweets and delights of My love, and soon you shall not be able to live without Me ; I shall be your life, for I shall really possess your heart and set up My lasting abode therein."

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“Lord,” I replied, “the place of my repose shall be where Thou art ; there will I make my abode, because I desire no other save that of my Beloved, the Saviour and Spouse of my soul.”

11. *The dignity, happiness, and advantages of the spouses of Jesus.*

The Saviour regarded me one day with an expression of extreme benignity, and said : “My daughter, from this moment be united to Me for ever, draw more and more closely the ties which bind us together. I have chosen you for My spouse, and to-day I accept you. Give yourself to Me as I give Myself to you, and in the intimacy of our relations you will appreciate the dignity, the happiness, and the advantage of having Me for your Spouse.

“Is there anything, in fact, more glorious for you than to have for your spouse the King of Heaven and Earth, who rules the most powerful men, who has dominion over monarchs and potentates, who makes them tremble on their thrones, and breaks them in pieces like an earthen vessel dashed upon the pavement? Is there any dignity surpassing this dignity? All that belongs to the husband is the property also of the wife. Everything is common between them. If the husband is a king he constitutes his consort queen in his dominions. If the husband is powerful, surrounded with glory, carried in triumph, he places his consort by his side and gives her a share in his power, his glory, and his triumphs. Thus, My daughter, I make everything over to the soul which desires to be My spouse ; I give her My power, My

graces, My merits; I constitute her queen in the kingdom of My Father.

“The union of souls is the happiness of life. The basis of that union is strength, but love constitutes its charm. Now, can there be a happiness surpassing that which subsists between a soul and God? This union is lasting, because it is founded on peace. I am the God of peace, and the souls which are united to Me receive from Me peace of conscience. This union is preferable to every other union, for I am the God of charity. I am Charity, and I infuse it into the soul which desires to be My spouse.

“Moreover, between Me and a soul which is united to Me there are no secrets, but the most perfect confidence. I see that soul as it really is, and it shows itself also as it is in reality. I show it everything I have; it sees it, it gazes on it as in the full light of day. What sweet effusions between My Heart and that of My spouse! She has given herself wholly to Me, and I have also given Myself wholly to her. She denies Me nothing, I grant to her all she asks of Me, and in the secrecy of these intimate effusions our union becomes closer and closer, more and more happy.

“Finally, My daughter, the soul which is my spouse knows that in whatever situation she finds herself everything is for her advantage. If she is poor, she beholds My poverty and esteems herself happy in resembling Me. If she is persecuted, she beholds all the persecutions which I suffered, and esteems herself happy in resembling Me. If she is involved in the troubles, the tribulations, and the sorrows of life, she casts her eyes on Me and deems herself happy in resembling Me. If God grants her consolations, graces, favours, she knows that she owes them to her title of

My spouse, and endeavours by her correspondence therewith to increase more and more in all virtues.

“Is there, then, anything more advantageous, more happy, more glorious for you than to be My spouse? I can suffice you, and I will suffice you, My daughter, for I am God. I will take more care of you, I will be more watchful over you, I will make you more happy, than could the tenderest of husbands, for I rule over all things as Master, and dispose all things for the happiness of those souls which give themselves to Me.

“Give yourself, then, to Me, unite yourself more and more closely to Me by a greater purity. Banish from your heart all that might wound My pure, chaste, and holy eyes. I am jealous of the affections of My spouses; I desire to possess their whole heart, that I may fill it with the sweetness and tenderness of My love, and make their relations with Me the most perfect, the most glorious, the most intimate that could exist in Heaven and on earth, next to the eternal relations between the Persons of the Holy Trinity.”

12. *Of vocation ; different vocations ; of true vocation ; necessity of a vocation for the religious life ; conditions of a religious life.*

On the morrow I had united myself to the Saviour Jesus by spiritual communion, when He spoke to me thus :—

“My daughter, I have taught you and given you to understand the happiness and dignity of those souls which are My spouses. I bestow this grace of union with Me on whomsoever I please. When I have cast

My eyes upon a soul, and desire to draw her to Me, I breathe into her heart a thought which grows and develops like a mysterious germ. Then this soul gives expression to the thought which I have implanted in her; she says: 'I shall be the spouse of Jesus.' She has heard My voice and responds to it. Happy are the souls which respond to My voice! but woe to those who desire to turn them away from Me, to check them, and stifle in them the vocation I have given them! Woe to the parents whose child I thus require, and who will not grant her to Me! From whom have they received their children if not from God? Is not God, therefore, their first Father? Has He not a stronger and a truer claim upon them than their parents have?

"What injustice, then, are they not guilty of towards God and towards their children! Towards God, because they rob Him of His rights; towards their children, because they rob them of that which is most precious to them, the privilege of belonging to Me and intimately possessing Me. What injustice towards God and towards their children! Towards God, for, if an earthly king asked them for a child to make her his spouse, they would grant her to him, and would even consent never to see her more, deeming themselves to be compensated by the honour which would accrue to them from so noble an alliance. But when the King of kings asks them for one of their children, He—yes, He is refused, as if He were not superior to all the kings of the earth. What injustice and what an insult! Injustice to their children; for these children, illuminated by the Divine light, see, not with the eyes of the body, but with the eyes of the soul, and consequently not as their parents see. They see happiness in being united to Me, and misery and

unhappiness in being far from Me. Is not this, then, to debar them from happiness? is not this to render them miserable? What injustice on the part of the parents and what hardness of heart!

“What reason they have to dread the chastisements of God for their misconduct! Woe to those parents! Woe also to those whom I cause to hear My voice and who do not hearken to it! The day will come when they too shall call upon Me, and I shall put them far from Me and remain deaf to their supplication. He who hears My voice ought to follow it. He who feels the breathing of My Spirit ought to obey the impulse of that breathing, and move towards the end which is indicated to him.

“I love to multiply Myself indefinitely, and to draw souls towards Me by a thousand different attractions and a thousand various ways. Some I leave in the world to fight valiantly My battles. These souls are strong, these souls are proof against all assaults; nothing will shake them, nothing will separate them from Me. Others there are whom I call into solitude, to speak to them alone, heart to heart, far from the world and its seductions, that I may quicken them continually by My grace, My word, and the glance of My eye.

“Some there are whom I attract, simply and at once, by the love they bear Me, and others by the fear of being separated from Me for all eternity.

“Most commonly, My daughter, I separate from the world the souls I desire to unite to Myself and to choose for My spouses, and they enter religion; that is to say, as I have explained to you, they bind themselves to Me in a closer manner by separating themselves from the world.

“Sometimes there are souls which believe themselves to be called and are not; and again there are souls whose motives are neither pure nor disinterested. It is for this reason that I wish to speak to you of the dispositions that are necessary for entering religion.

“In the first place, My daughter, it is necessary to be called, and then to correspond with the vocation, which is nothing else but an inclination given by God to a soul in order to its entering on a state of life which will sanctify it by the special practice of the virtues.

“This inclination is developed in a soul in two ways. The first is that inclination of a soul which accepts the impulse of God, not to avoid the troubles and conflicts to be found in the world, but to glorify the Lord the more by leading a more perfect kind of life.

“The second is that inclination of a soul which accepts the impulse of God because it sees the conflicts it will have to undergo in the world and the dangers it will have to encounter, and it is fearful on account of its weakness. This way of accepting the impulse of God is good, but less perfect than the other.

“Care, however, must be taken to avoid seeking to supply for this vocation, this call of God, by a mere personal desire inspired by a false devotion or by a disgust for the world which seems unendurable. In fact, My daughter, he who desires to enter religion must first renounce his own will, and then learn patiently to put up with himself and with others. Otherwise, this ill-considered resolution, having no solid foundation, would subject him to the danger of leading a melancholy life, irksome, and altogether miserable, when the first fire which had been enkindled

in a moment of enthusiasm, impatience, and inconsiderateness should become extinct. The number of those who act thus is great, and, instead of advancing in perfection by uniting themselves more and more closely to Me, they scandalise others and prevent their making progress in goodness and virtue.

“When a soul has heard My voice calling her she ought to prepare to fulfil its behests by a great purity of heart, following the counsels of him who has been made acquainted with her vocation, and has recognised it as a true one. She must rid herself of the old leaven which impels to sin by rooting up with a generous effort all evil habits. For woe to one who should import among the blessed of My Heart a guilty heart prone to sin.

“They who desire thus to quit everything that they may possess Me and live with Me, ought to regard themselves as dead to the world, to the devil, and to self. 1. To the world; that is to say, they must forget their relatives and their friends, putting from them even every thought regarding them in a human and natural way in order to think of them only before God. 2. To the devil, who makes war on all mankind, but particularly on souls which give themselves to Me. He does not at first suggest to them any great sins, but inclines them to relaxation by means of idle thoughts and imperfections which do them as much harm as venial sins do to people living in the world. If a man hearkens to the devil, he falls little by little into forgetfulness of his duties, and separates himself from Me. 3. They must be dead to self; that is to say, they must not listen to the perverse suggestions of the flesh and of the senses. This death is a veritable victory, and the most difficult of all. It is a

victory ; for it is really a triumph over self. It is a victory hard to win ; in fact, it costs a man much to conquer himself in everything ; to be no more affected by insults and injuries than by praises and honours ; to cleave to nothing, to divest himself of everything, in order to repose solely in Me.

“This threefold death is a veritable life, and the only life which is worthy of the name. For to be thus dead is to be united to Me, it is to possess Me, and I am the life of those who, while yet on earth, desire to live through all eternity the life in which I initiate them here below.

“The world, the devil, and concupiscence make war upon the souls which I have chosen for Myself : the world, by inspiring them with the desire of the goods of earth ; the devil, by the spirit of rebellion ; concupiscence, by impure temptations. But I furnish these souls with three weapons, by which they may subdue the world, the devil, and concupiscence ; these are the vow of poverty as against the world, the vow of obedience as against the devil, and the vow of chastity as against concupiscence.”

13. *Of vows ; their nature, obligations and effects.*

“Vows, My daughter, are a stay, a support, a protection, and defence to the soul. The soul feels that the desire of riches would soon gain the mastery over her ; she places the vow of poverty as a barrier to hinder and prevent her being overcome ; and so with the other vows. A vow is something essentially free, but sometimes it is supremely necessary. It may be, and may become, also a very important thing. Moreover, vows must not be taken except with circumspection.

“A vow is a promise made to God on oath of performing some good act. There are two kinds of vows : the conditional vow, and that which is made without any condition. The condition once realised, the vow that has been made must be fulfilled ; the absolute vow, or that which includes no condition, must always be performed. A vow is a thing very pleasing to God, and the actions performed under the obligation or necessity of a vow are more pleasing to God than others, because the engagement to perform them was voluntary. There is no sin in not making vows, but there is sin in not performing them, and the sin is so much the graver as the thing promised is grave and important, unless there has been an express reservation, to the effect that there is no obligation to fulfil the vow under pain of mortal sin. It is prudent never to make a vow without the authorisation of the confessor, and a confessor ought never to permit of vows in perpetuity and for life, until he has well convinced himself of the virtue, firmness, and energy of him who wishes to enter into such engagement.

“What troubles a man creates for himself by vows lightly taken ! What embarrassments he would have spared himself by not taking those vows ! What graces a man draws down upon himself when he corresponds with the desire which God manifests to him that he should bind himself by vow. What aids he obtains for himself ! Oh, blessed are they who resist the world and its riches by the vow of poverty, and who remain faithful in observing it. Blessed are they who resist the devil and his spirit of rebellion and pride by the vow of obedience, and who remain faithful in observing it ! Blessed are they who resist concupiscence and impurity by the

vow of chastity, and remain faithful in observing it!

“I will be their riches in Eternity; I will be their glory in Eternity; I will be their happiness in Eternity. Our relations, begun in time, will endure for ever and ever. Have hope, My daughter; you will triumph over all. I will hide you like My dove in the hole of the rock; I will take you away from the world, and give you a place in the holy family consecrated to My Divine Heart: then you will be wholly Mine, and I shall be wholly yours.”

Love to Jesus for ever in the Sacrament of the Altar. Amen.

BOOK XII.

THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

Glory and praise, love and thanksgiving be rendered unceasingly to Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, to the Father, and the Holy Ghost for ever and ever. Amen.

1. *Of life ; natural, spiritual, and eternal.*

THE Saviour Jesus said to me one day : " My daughter, life is God, life is I Myself ; I call Myself life, I am the life, I give life to every one who has it ; I have given it to all which have possessed it from the beginning of time, and I shall give it to all which shall possess it in ages yet to come. My life is not like the life of creatures. Creatures have only a participation of life, whilst I possess life in all its reality and all its plenitude. My life is eternal ; it never had a beginning and it will never have an end. The life of man is finite, it is limited, it has an end ; but this life is not true life ; it is but an adumbration of the life which he is to receive when this first life is lost to him.

" The life of man after his resurrection will never have an end ; it will endure for ever, and I will give him this boundless participation in the life which will make him the son of God, as I gave Myself the participation

in the life of man which made Me the Son of Man. It was by the abasement of My Divinity that I took part in the life of man, and became the Son of Man. It is by the elevation of his humanity that man will obtain a share in the life of God, and become like unto Him by that participation.

“This is why I created man, to make him a sharer in My life ; this is why I redeemed him, to make him a sharer in My life ; this is why I bestowed My graces upon him, to make him a sharer in My life.

“There are then three lives in man : the life for time, the natural life or the life of creation ; the life both for time and for Eternity, the supernatural life or the life of redemption ; and the life of Eternity or of glory.

“These three lives are given to man ; he has no right to them, he has them from God. All ought to receive these three lives from God ; this is God’s will and desire, and yet all do not receive them. The first two lead on to the third, but only when they are employed in accordance with the law given to man by his God. If he breaks these laws man does not receive the eternal life of glory ; he receives, indeed, eternal life, but in malediction and separation from God.

“I have spoken to you, My daughter, of the supernatural life which I bestow upon men by My grace, the admirable life which raises man to the dignity of son of God and renders his actions meritorious for Heaven. This life is at once in the life of time and in that of Eternity. It is in the life of time by the natural life of man ; it is in the life of Eternity by the life of glory. This is why, in speaking to you of the natural life and of the glorious life, I shall not separate

from these two lives the idea of supernatural life, because it is found in both the one and the other.

“The life of man in time is the work of an intelligent and reasonable being, meriting either the life of glory or that of a miserable Eternity.

“This life is a labour, and therefore a trouble, a tribulation, a continual suffering. Tears, wailings, and groanings belong to this life. It is an exile, a place of passage and transition ; it is a tent set up in a desert which has to be removed on the morrow. It passes away like the shadow of a cloud scattered by the wind ; it passes away like a dream, and the longest life, when it is about to end—what is it to him who loses it ?

“Thus, My daughter, you must not attach yourself to this life, or set your heart upon it, and let yourself be captivated by it. All its happiness, if you will examine it, will appear to you only misery ; but all its woes, all its afflictions, all its sufferings, will prove inestimable blessings, if you know how to receive them as I have taught you.

“To what end, then, My daughter, have you received this life of time ? To know God, to love Him, and to serve Him, and by this knowledge, love, and service, to attain to the life of glory in Eternity.

“This is why you have received life. If you thus employ your temporal life, it will be good, for thus you will be born again to the only true life, the life which will never pass away. If you thus employ your life, you will not attach yourself to this life for itself, but for God, who gave it you ; you will not attach yourself to this life in order to acquire the goods which it possesses, but to gain the goods which are prepared by God who gave it you ; you will live the life

of time, without regarding time but looking only to Eternity.

“You will live the life of time, not to live, but to desire death and union with God, to work out your salvation, to merit the mercy of God, to render His justice favourable to you, that one day you may hear the Lord say to you : ‘Courage, My daughter ; come and have part in the reward which I have promised My elect.’

“If you do not employ your temporal life to win the life of glory, you will necessarily fall into the life of malediction and damnation.

“Fly from this woe, My daughter ; have always before your eyes the eternal life of glory, have the desire of it ever in your heart. The eternal life of glory is that which is destined for you, that after which alone you ought to sigh, the life which will never pass away, which will give you the only real good, that is, God. Eternal life is God and the knowledge of God. Eternal life is God and the love of God. Eternal life is God and the possession of God. Eternal life is God and intimate union with God. Eternal life is the work of the charity of God towards man and of the charity of man towards God for ever and ever. O blessed life ! O life without which there is no true happiness ! O life inexhaustible and communicated to all the elect throughout Eternity ! Life of the everlasting praise of God ! Life of the everlasting peace of man ! Life of the triumph of God in man ! Life of the triumph of man in God ! O life of Eternity ! Life of man in God ! Life of man with God ! Life of man for God ! Remain united to Me by grace and the sentiments of your heart, and you will have part in this life for ever.”

2. *Of salvation ; the advantage accruing from the thought of it.*

One day when I had had the happiness of receiving Holy Communion I entered into my heart, and threw myself on my knees at the feet of Jesus ; who spoke to me as follows :—

“ My daughter, disengage yourself from the world, its possessions and its riches ; detach yourself from yourself ; put far from you thoughts of ambition, vain-glory, and pride ; think only of living according to God and for God ; think only of doing His holy will ; think only of belonging to Him ; think only of gaining Heaven and saving your soul. Let this be the continual thought of your mind. This is the thought which will most strengthen you, which will be the most profitable to you, and the results of which will endure through all eternity.

“ What would it profit you, My daughter, to gain the whole world if in the end you lost your soul ? What would it matter were you to lose all else, if you gained Heaven ? What matter to live a wretched life, a life of tribulation, pain, and suffering, on earth, if you are to live happy for ever in Heaven ?

“ You are destined to eternal happiness. From all eternity God reserves for you this participation in glory. From all eternity this thought was in the mind of God, even before the creation of the world. This thought is still in His mind at this very hour, since He grants you His graces, His most precious favours, in order to facilitate your attainment of Heaven.

“ Now, God, My daughter, in His dealings with you is not actuated by personal interest. God is sufficient

to Himself ; He has need of no one. Correspond, then, with those designs of God regarding you, and let the thought which is in the mind of God be also that of your soul.

“Some day you will die ; that is to say, your soul will be separated from your body. Your body will return to dust, but you soul will fly to God, to receive its reward or its punishment, a reward and a punishment which are for all eternity. Your body will not always remain in the earth, it will rise again at the last day, to share everlastingly the lot of your soul. It is most important, therefore, My daughter, that you should be solicitous about your eternal future, more than about your possessions, your riches, your position in life, more than about some vexation, some trial, some suffering, or the state of your health. God will not ask you if you have acquired great riches, or have held a high position in the world, or have enjoyed good health ; He will ask you if you have worked out your salvation.

“God gives you everything which is necessary for your salvation ; turn everything, then, to your profit ; always act as you would wish to have acted at the hour of death or before the tribunal of God. Think more of your soul than of your body, attend more to your soul than to your body, save your soul, and care not for the saving of your body in this present life, if, in order to save it, you must lose your soul.

“Think more of God than of anything else, more than of yourself. Think of God that you may pay Him your homage, walk in the way of His commandments, and observe His laws. Think of God everywhere, when you are alone, when you are in company, when you are in the world, in all places, and then you

will not offend Him ; for you will say to yourself : ‘ God desires my salvation ; I ought, therefore, to work it out by doing good, avoiding evil, and corresponding to His graces.’

“ O My daughter, imitate not those young people who entirely forget that they have a soul to save for eternity ; imitate not those labourers whom God calls to come and labour in His vineyard, and who, continuing deaf to His voice, remain idle. These, My daughter, will not receive the penny* promised to all who are called by the father of the family. They will not receive the penny, which is the possession of Heaven ; they will be cast into the exterior darkness, that is to say, far from God into the flames of hell.

“ Consecrate to God your youth, consecrate to Him every moment of your life, that you may work out your salvation.”

3. *The difficulty of salvation to the rich.*

The Saviour Jesus said to me one day : “ My daughter, you know what is said in the Gospel,† that it is as difficult for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven as for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. I say more : The rich man shall never enter Heaven. By the rich I mean those who are attached to riches and those who covet them. A man, therefore, may be poor and nevertheless rich in his mind, his thoughts, his desires. One whose only shelter is a poor hut, who is stripped of everything and reduced to beggary, may be rich despite his penury, by the desire he has of riches. He is attached to the

* Comp. St. Matthew xx. 2, etc.

† Comp. St. Matthew xix. 24, St. Mark x. 25, St. Luke xviii. 25.

little he possesses, he uses every effort to increase and add to it, at least in imagination, if he cannot do so in reality. He thinks of what he would do if he were rich, and then, feeling that notwithstanding his desires he is no further advanced, he casts an envious eye upon the rich and longs to be able to do as they do. Poor as he is in reality, that man is rich by the desires of his heart ; he thinks only of riches, he covets only riches he lives only for riches. That man will never enter Heaven.

“ The rich man who is attached to what he possesses, his fortune, his property, his estates, whose mind is constantly occupied therewith, who by aid of his riches procures himself every sort of gratification, every pleasure, every convenience, every comfort, everything which can make his life pleasant and enjoyable, who grudges no outlay for himself and never assists the poor,—such a one shall also have part in the malediction denounced against the rich.

“ But just as there are poor men who are rich, so also I know rich men who are poor. Behold that man : he has boundless wealth, he is loaded with honours, surrounded with glory, he is able to enjoy all the comforts of life. What passes in his heart ? He thinks that the only true riches is God, and is in no wise attached to his possessions ; he regards the glory with which his name is encircled as a puff of smoke, and, far from letting himself be dazzled with the praises and flatteries of men, he refers to God all the honours that are paid him, because he knows that he is nothing and that praise is due to God alone. He loves the poor ; he treats them with the greatest charity ; he relieves them in their necessities ; he is the faithful steward and depository of the goods which

God has given him ; he is not fearful of impoverishing himself by his bounty to the poor ; he is ever ready to become poor himself, if such be the will of Heaven. He loves the poor, and he also loves poverty ; he deprives himself of every gratification ; he puts up with the discomforts which happen to him, fixing his heart, his thoughts, his desires on God alone. Verily, verily, I say to you, this rich man is truly poor, and will partake of the blessings which are promised to the poor.

“ Heaven is for him, as for the poor man who, in spite of his destitution and indigence, is content with his lot and never utters a complaint. Heaven is for him, as for the poor man who despises riches and attaches himself only to the abiding and imperishable goods of Eternity, who pities the rich because of the perils to which they are exposed, and who, so far from regarding them with envy, on the contrary prays for them, that God may grant them the grace to save their souls. Heaven is for him, as for the poor man who loves his poverty, and deprives himself even of what he has that he may give it to those who are still poorer than himself.

“ Heaven is for that rich man as for that poor man ; for their sentiments are the same ; they are both detached from the riches, the pleasures, the satisfactions of earth. They both practise poverty with cheerfulness of heart, the one from necessity, the other voluntarily. They assist the poor, each according to his ability. They have one only good, one only treasure, one only thought, God. O happy, a thousand times happy, these two poor men : theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

“ O ye rich, enter into the views of Providence.

When God gave you the goods you possess, it was not that you might take your pleasure and indulge your comfort and your ease ; He delivered them to you that you might be His stewards and the agents of His care for those who have them not. When you are yourself living in abundance, could you be so hard-hearted as to refuse assistance to the unfortunates who knock at your door, sometimes in most pressing need, destitute of everything or wasted with hunger ? What excuse would you allege ? your household expenses, the education and settlement of your children, and a thousand other reasons ? True, your household expenses are considerable ; but could you not curtail a large portion of what you now spend on your festivities, your assemblies, your evening parties, your dress, and your attendants ? Curtail these useless expenses, and pour your superfluities into the hands of the poor ; you will detract nothing from the splendour of your rank ; far from it : you will invest it with a splendour which will not only strike the eyes of men but will penetrate the heavens. Deprive yourselves of all these useless daily satisfactions, and you will have enough therewith to relieve the poor, and the poor will pray for you. You will still be able to bring up your children, to give them a sounder and a more solid education, by teaching them to walk in your footsteps, in simplicity, in love for the poor, and in the practice of all virtues. God will bless you, and will bless your children ; He will assist you in the establishment of your family, and you will see it increase and multiply, bearing with it the happy results of the Divine benedictions.

“ Learn that God gave you your riches only that you might relieve the poor. He commands you to stretch out your hand to them, He commands you to

come to their aid. This is to you an obligation of justice. In doing this you will merit no reward; if God is pleased to reward you, it is only because He has engaged to do so.

“Such, then, are the duties of a Christian : he must not be attached to riches, he must not desire them. If he is rich, he must assist the poor ; if he is poor, he must not covet the goods of the rich, but hope in the mercy and providence of Him who feeds the birds of the field. God has disposed all things well by His wisdom. He will call the rich man to account for the administration of his goods ; He will call the poor man to account for his submission.

“Forget not, My daughter, that riches are the occasion of ruin to great numbers. Happy the man who does not yield to the temptation of desiring riches ! Happy he who is not attached to them when he possesses them ! Happy he who does not desire, or seek, or crave, or covet any other goods than those of Eternity !”

4. *Of death ; natural, spiritual, and eternal ; advantage of the thought of death in temptations, adversities, and the troubles of life, in joy and prosperity, in the state of sin, of justice, and of perfection. Death, so terrible to the sinner, is full of sweetness to the just. Of the desire of death.*

I had assisted one day at the burial of a woman. While I was praying for her, and begging God to have mercy on her, I heard the Saviour Jesus speaking thus to me :—

“My daughter, there are three kinds of death : natural death, spiritual death, and eternal death.

Natural death is the separation of the soul and the body ; spiritual death is the separation of the soul and of grace by sin ; eternal death is the separation of the soul and of God by the eternal punishment of sin.

“ Natural death, My daughter, is the separation of the soul and the body ; this death is the first punishment pronounced against sin. Sin was the cause of death. Man was not destined to die, but because he rebelled against God he was condemned to death.

“ All men are condemned to natural death because they have all sinned in Adam. Great and small, learned and ignorant, rich and poor, monarchs and their subjects, all are marked with the sign of death, and not one escapes it. Each disappears in his turn, and every day is a step nearer death.

“ All men are condemned to natural death ; the decree is gone forth against all ; but no one knows, except by a special revelation, either the day, or the hour, or the manner, or the place of his death. Death comes like a thief ; it surprises a man when he least expects it, most frequently at a time when he is promising himself still a long life. Death comes and destroys all the pleasures of life, the riches of life, the honours of life, the strength and vigour of life ; it leaves nothing of man but a corpse, nothing but vile food for the worms of the grave.

“ Spiritual death is the separation of the soul and of the grace of God. Your soul, My daughter, is immortal ; it has no need, like your body, of being vivified by a principle superior to itself ; it does not create itself, it comes from God ; but God creates the soul full of life, and the life which God gives to the soul is an immortal life. This life of the soul, however, is not its true life ; there is a life superior to this life, and

life more exalted, more precious, which is communicated to it, and which becomes its own life, which the soul may possess and may lose when once it has received it. This life is given to it by sanctifying grace, of which I have already spoken to you.

“Sanctifying grace is the spiritual and supernatural life of the soul. It is given to the soul by baptism and by the sacraments; it is taken from it by mortal sin. Every soul which is in the state of mortal sin has lost the life of grace. There is a radical incompatibility between the life of grace and mortal sin. Thus, every soul which is in the state of mortal sin is dead to the life of grace, although it preserves its natural life, which was given it at the moment of its creation. This death is terrible and supremely deplorable, because it may fix the soul in eternal death.

“Eternal death, My daughter, is the eternal separation of the soul from God by the punishment which God inflicts on souls in the state of sin.

“When a soul is separated from the body which it vivifies, and appears before God, its lot is determined immediately and for all eternity. If it is united to God by sanctifying grace, it will be eternally happy and enjoy for all eternity the vision of God; if it is separated from God, not by mortal sin, but by the punishment due to that sin which it has not expiated, or by venial sin, this separation will be only temporary; it is united to God by sanctifying grace, and, after making it expiate what it owes to the Divine justice, He will call it into His everlasting tabernacles. But if this soul, on the contrary, is separated from God by mortal sin, and is found in that state at the moment at which He demands an account of its life during time, it will incur eternal damnation. The life of

grace has departed from that soul, the death of sin has wholly penetrated it ; it will remain eternally in that death, and that eternal death will receive a punishment which will have no end.

“ All must die, but only the death of nature. No one can escape that, but all ought to fly the other two. Now, for this, the best way is to think often of the first death, the separation of soul and body. The thought of death serves to detach from the world, from its pomp, its pleasures, and its joys, which are the causes of sin and of death, spiritual and eternal.

“ The thought of death closes the ear to the temptations of Satan, arrests the movements of concupiscence, resists sin, the cause of spiritual death and of eternal death. The thought of death is a weapon against pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth, which cause spiritual death and eternal death.

“ All sin comes from forgetting death. He who thinks of death does not sin, because man loves life, cherishes life, desires life, and by sinning he loses the only true life, the life of the soul and the life of glory. When a man has before his eyes the thought of death, he sees the vanity of the world, the vanity of its pleasures and of its riches, the vanity of everything in it ; he flies from the world and everything in the world, that he may cleave to God. When he has the thought of death before his eyes, he sees its nothingness, the nothingness of riches, the nothingness of self-love, of sensual pleasures, of the gratifications of mind and heart : he flies from everything that he may cleave to God.

“ How useful, then, My daughter, will the thought of death be to you, seeing that it will make you fly

from sin and from every manner of sin ! In whatever situation you may find yourself, the thought of death will be salutary to you. If you are in trouble, you will say to yourself as you think of death : 'Courage, my soul ; death will soon come ; if we endure those sufferings well, it will put an end to them for ever.' If you are happy, you will say to yourself, as you think of death : 'O my soul, the joy we are having on earth will soon pass away ; let us not attach ourselves to it, but do what is good, that we may possess a joy which will have no end.' If you are in a state of sadness and depression, you will say to yourself, as you think of death : 'Forward, my soul ; let us labour with fervour, that death, when it comes, may not find us with empty hands.' If you are in sin, you will say to yourself, as you think of death : 'O my soul, let us quit this state and return to the life of grace, that we may not fall into eternal death, but remain united to God for ever.'

"If you are beginning to walk in the way of salvation, if for some little while you have been fighting the battles of the Lord, you will say to yourself : 'O my soul, let us be bold against our passions, against Satan and the world, against our own weaknesses ; let us struggle and march onward, as God would have us to do, in goodness and in virtue, that we may win the life of Eternity. If you are already advanced in the way of goodness and wisdom, you will say to yourself, as you think of death : 'O my soul, let us gain all kinds of virtue, let us lay up treasures which neither rust can consume nor thieves carry away ; death may come with speed, let us lose no time.' If you are making rapid progress in the way of perfection, you will say to yourself, as you think of death : 'O my

soul, how sweet to be united to God ! Let us redouble our efforts, that we may merit to possess Him for ever, let us give Him all we have, dispose all with a view to Him, live for Him, that we may die in Him and live with Him for ever.'

" Thus, My daughter, the thought of death not only makes men avoid sin, it makes them also practise what is good, acquire all kinds of virtue, and consequently leads them straight to eternal life by the preservation and increase of spiritual life through sanctifying grace.

" Think thus of death, My daughter, and when the hour of your departure comes, you will not tremble as sinners do, but you will hope as the just do ; you will not be troubled like sinners, but will be calm like the just.

" What remorse will not the sinner feel at the hour of death, who has made such ill use of life, abused My graces, and committed more sins than he has hairs on his head ! But what will be the consolation of the just man, who has consecrated all his time to God—his childhood, his youth, his middle life, and his old age—has corresponded to the graces of God, and adorned his soul with all kinds of virtue !

" What dreadful anguish will not the sinner endure at the hour of death, who suffers in his body the pains of his sickness and in his mind the agony of remorse for his iniquity ; who has to leave for ever his relatives, his family, his goods, everything which is dear to him, and despairs of obtaining pardon and grace ! But what sweet consolations to the just man, who sees in his sufferings a source of new merits, enjoys peace of soul, and places all his confidence in God, whom he loves with all his strength !

“What terror to the sinner at the hour of death, who seems already to hear the judgment which God pronounces against him, and sees hell opening under his feet to engulf him for all eternity ! But what joy to the just man at the hour of death ! He knows that God is just, kind, and merciful ; he knows that God loves souls of good-will, and has promised to His faithful servant the reward of eternal life ; he abandons himself to Him, commits his spirit into His divine hands, and dies in peace.

“Yes, My daughter, in the same measure as death is terrible to the sinner it is sweet to the just man, who, far from dreading it, desires it with all his heart ; and rightly so. Death, in fact, delivers the just man from temptations and from the danger of losing his salvation : this is why he desires death, as being a good and the most precious of all goods. Death delivers him from the sufferings of body, of mind, and of heart : this is why he desires it, as being a good and the most precious of all goods. Death delivers him from his misery, his poverty, his destitution. So long as he has life he does not possess God ; death is about to give Him to him : this is why he desires it, as being a good and the most precious of goods, because it is about to give him God, the only true good.

“Live in justice, My daughter, and you will desire to die ; live in justice, and death will be to you full of sweetness ; live in justice, and death will unite you to God for ever.”

5. Of the last judgment.

The Saviour Jesus said to me one day : “My daughter, every man is judged by Me after his

death, and receives the reward or the punishment which he has merited.

“Another judgment will come after this first judgment. It will take place at the end of the ages, and will be but the confirmation of My first judgment passed on every particular soul. It will be like the first in everything ; only it will be pronounced upon all men and before all men together, condemning some to the eternal pains of hell and calling others to the supreme felicity of Heaven. This judgment will also be pronounced upon the angels and before all the angels of hell and of Heaven to assure to the latter the eternal possession of Paradise and cast the others into the everlasting flames of My justice.

“My Father judges no one, My daughter, but has given Me authority to judge all things ; and I shall judge them in My wisdom and justice.

“Man delivered over to his free will commits evil or does good. Now, My daughter, My sanctity must put far from it for ever all that is evil, and on the other hand unite itself to all that is good. Man delivered over to his free will does good or does evil. Now, My daughter, it is needful for man to know what has been good in him and what has been evil in him ; of himself he cannot know this ; and it is necessary for Me to manifest it to him. Man delivered over to his free will does good or evil ; the good must be rewarded and the evil punished ; and it is I who, in passing judgment on him, shall apportion to him his reward or his punishment. Man delivered over to his free will does good, and tends towards God, his first beginning ; or he does evil and departs from God. It is I who, if he has done good, shall establish him for ever in God ; and it is I who, if he has done evil, shall fix him

for ever, not in the possession of the glory of God, but in the malediction of justice.

“This judgment will be infallible. My eternal light will shine into all the souls of men and penetrate the most secret folds of their hearts. I will command My light, and it will display before My eyes all the crimes or virtues of men, all My graces received with piety or rejected and rendered void. I shall see all the deeds of men and shall judge them.

“This judgment, My daughter, will be severe. For I shall not judge only in My own name, but in the name of God, My Father, who has committed to Me His judgment. It will be dictated by justice. To the just I shall say: ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the reward which has been destined for you from eternity.’ To the sinner I shall say: ‘Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.’

“The heavens will open to receive My elect, and the depths of hell will swallow up Satan and the damned.

“At that day, My daughter, sinners will no longer be able to implore My mercy; I shall be inexorable and leave My justice to take its course at that day, the Wounds of My Passion will shine with a brilliancy so intense that the stars of heaven will pale before their brightness; My Cross will be the mighty sceptre which I shall bear in My hands; it will protect the just and overwhelm sinners. At that day I shall make manifest all the iniquities, all the crimes, all the sins of the damned; all the virtues, all the perfection, and all the justice of the elect. At that day I shall destroy time, and Eternity shall pursue its course.

“Live, My daughter, in such wise, that the day of judgment may not be to you a day of everlasting confusion.”

6. *Of Purgatory; the nature of its pains.*

Another day He said: "My daughter, nothing defiled will ever enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Now, the soul is stained, not only by mortal sin, but also by venial sins and imperfections.* Do you know, My daughter, what becomes of a soul when it is separated from its body and is stained with venial sins or imperfections? It does not go to hell, because hell is reserved for those who have committed mortal sin and have died in that state. It goes to Purgatory; that is to say, to the place to which God sends it that it may expiate its stains and entirely efface them. It is there also that God detains those souls which have not yet satisfied His justice for their mortal sins, although they have received the forgiveness of them by absolution of the priest or by an act of perfect contrition before dying. Thus, My daughter, all just souls in a state of venial sin or guilty of some imperfection, all just souls which have not entirely satisfied the justice of God, go to Purgatory to expiate their sins and render satisfaction to God.

"All the souls in Purgatory are in a state of justice: they have the life of grace, they are confirmed in grace, they can neither sin nor commit any kind of evil. They love God above everything, and with the purest love, and they cannot but love Him. They tend towards God, they sigh after Him, but as yet they

* It is not by itself, but by the vicious motive which leads ordinarily to the commission of it, that imperfection stains the soul, renders it *guilty*, and deserving of the pains of Purgatory. The language here is nevertheless strictly accurate, for it is from their own proper objects, and not from accidental and variable circumstances, that our actions receive their designation. See note, Book V. Section 24. *Note of Jesuit Examiners.*

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cannot go to Him. They have to make expiation, and they make it in Purgatory.

“The pain of these souls is twofold : they suffer the pain of the loss of God, and they suffer also the pain of fire.

“The pain which they suffer from the loss of the vision of God is beyond all you can imagine, My daughter. These souls, in fact, understand in the places where they now are the value of the possession of God ; they cleave to nothing but God ; they love nothing but God ; they long to possess Him, and are held captives far from Him. Their love of God is so great that they suffer intensely from being separated from Him. While they were on earth they did not give heed to those little faults which offend God ; in Purgatory they expiate them by a temporary separation from God.

“To this pain, all interior, is joined the pain of fire, which causes them dreadful sufferings. The fire of Purgatory, My daughter, is beyond all the fires of earth ; the fire of Purgatory makes these souls suffer more than all the martyrdoms, all the maladies, all the woes of earth united together in one man to overwhelm and torment him.*

* Not that all souls in Purgatory suffer all these torments, or with the same intensity ; their pains being determined by the state in which they die, and being moderated as time advances and the debt they owe is gradually paid. From well-authenticated revelations it would even appear that some perfect souls suffer only the pain of loss ; which, indeed, to them must be most exquisite. “Years or centuries of corrective discipline may be required for some, while others may almost tread unscathed the burning marl of that middle world of cleansing agony, like the three Hebrew boys who were tried as gold in the fire of God’s chastening affliction, to whom the stifling breath of the furnace

“O My daughter, let this thought of Purgatory urge you to fly, not only venial sin, but also the slightest imperfections. Let it make you expiate also all the sins of your life, that at the hour of your death you may be able to enter Heaven without undergoing the torments of Purgatory.

“Merit this grace by the perfection of your life. In Purgatory, you would not be able to merit of yourself the diminution of your pains; but on earth you may so entirely satisfy God as to have no satisfaction to render in Eternity; you may also make satisfaction for the souls in Purgatory by offering to God your actions, your good works, your communions, as also by gaining indulgences and applying them to those souls. Pray for these poor souls, relieve them in the midst of their torments. You could do nothing which would be more pleasing to Me, for I love these souls, and desire to give them as soon as possible the glory of Paradise. You could do nothing more profitable to yourself, for these souls will remember you in Heaven, and will not cease praying for you, that you may obtain all the graces of God which may be necessary to enable you to persevere constantly in good.”

7. *All Saints' Day.*

On All Saints' Day I awoke very early, and betook myself to the Saviour Jesus. I was meditating on the mystery of the day, when God allowed me to perceive how admirable He is in His Saints and how great is the

seven times heated was as the freshness of the dewy breeze—*quasi ventum roris flantem* (Dan. iii. 50)—nor did its smell pass upon their raiment.” *Catholic Eschatology and Universalism*, by H. N. Oxenham, second edition.

reward which He bestows upon them in Heaven. Then I heard the voice of the Saviour Jesus. He said to me :—

“ My daughter, God manifests His mercy on earth and in Heaven. It is manifested on earth, for He has given to man a Saviour who has made reparation for his sin. That Saviour am I, the Son of God, God as My Father is God, equal in all things to My Father. I took the nature of man, the body of man, the soul of man. I suffered, I died for man. Because of My death God pardoned man ; because of My death He restored to man his original dignity ; because of My death He exalted the greatness of man to such a degree as to adopt him for His son and desired that man should call Him his father. This is what God does for man on earth ; this is the supreme work of the mercy of God.

“ The mercy of God is manifested also in Heaven, where He loads the Saints with glory and happiness, and bestows upon them all that He had promised them in reward of their fidelity. In Heaven there are divers degrees in the bliss of the elect. God glorifies them according as they themselves have glorified Him on earth. The Blessed Virgin holds the highest place in Heaven after the Holy Trinity. Below Mary come the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Virgins, the Martyrs, and all the other Saints of Paradise. Each among them occupies a throne, the nearness of which to God is proportioned to the greatness of their respective sanctity ; and, notwithstanding this diversity of glory, all are perfectly happy and desire nothing more. They see God face to face, they possess Him, and this sight and this possession form their felicity, a perfect felicity, a

felicity without pain of any kind, a felicity without sorrow, unchangeable, perpetual, and lasting, a felicity which is eternal, ever the same and ever new. If men did but know how great is the bliss of Heaven, they would use all their endeavours to merit it. All the troubles, all the sacrifices, all the tribulations of life are nothing to gain the bliss of Heaven ; they are less than a farthing given for the purchase of the empire of the whole world. Keep your eyes ever fixed on Heaven, My daughter ; think of the happiness which awaits you ; give yourself to God in time, He will be yours in Eternity."

At this moment the priest was going up to the altar to offer the Holy Sacrifice. I will not describe the state in which the words of the Saviour Jesus put me ; I could neither open my book nor say a prayer, I could but abandon myself to the attraction of the moment, which completely absorbed me. I felt myself penetrated, not by the sentiments proceeding from my own soul, but by an interior force such as I had never experienced before, and which must have come from on high. I felt myself penetrated with lively sentiments of compunction, and my heart suffered therefrom to such a degree that I thought it would burst. Then I was seized with the profoundest reverence for the presence of God, His greatness, and His majesty ; I could have wished to annihilate myself before Him. At the Consecration I beheld Jesus descend upon the altar clothed with glory and with hands full of graces. An angel took them from the Saviour's Hands and scattered them over the faithful ; then, advancing towards me, he presented me with a chalice, saying : "These are the privileged graces which the Saviour Jesus sends you." Putting forth my hands to the

chalice, I felt my soul inundated with those graces, not sensibly but spiritually, and filled therewith almost beyond what it was able to contain. After this, the angel laid his hand upon my mouth, as if to show that all these graces were to remain within me. How happy I was then ! My whole soul, my whole heart, my whole being seemed to me to be transformed. My soul was full of God, my heart full of God, my whole being full of God. I could not take my eyes off Jesus, so great was the goodness, the sweetness, the amiableness that was in Him. I was unable to speak ; but I made an effort, and at the moment of the priest's communion I said to Jesus : " Lord, pour down Thy graces also on Thy servant " : I meant my pastor. He hearkened to my prayer, and I saw Him take the chalice which the angel held in his hands, raise His eyes to Heaven, and, blessing the chalice, present it to His minister, on whose mouth He laid His Hand, as the angel had laid his hand on mine.

Then I approached the Holy Table to receive Jesus in Communion. He descended into my heart, and seated Himself therein upon a throne, as before He had been seated on the altar. There I reposed, near Jesus, and slept like a child in its mother's arms. This sleep, however, was not a real sleep. I slept, and yet I saw, I heard, I understood everything ; it was not therefore sleep. But neither was it being awake. What was it ? I do not know. It was neither life nor sleep, nor death, and all I can say is that Jesus was in my heart, and that my happiness exceeded all that the tongue of men can express.

Then I heard voices crying aloud : " Have pity on us, have pity on us, you our friends." These words affected me deeply, and I prayed to the Saviour for

the souls which implored my compassion. I prayed to Him, but my prayer was groundless too much on myself; I prayed as if I had a right to be heard. Jesus did not hearken to me. I feared then that I had offended Him, and asked Him if I had done anything wrong. Jesus looked kindly upon me, and said: "No, My daughter." But, not knowing how to explain why my prayer had been disregarded, I asked a second and a third time if I had done anything wrong. He replied with the same gentleness: "No, My daughter."—"Why, then, have You not hearkened to me, Lord?"—"Only to show you that even when I am pleased to load you with My greatest favours, nothing is due to yourself. Remain ever in sentiments of the deepest humility."

He then added: "Whom do you take Me to be, My daughter?" I replied: "My God."—"Why your God?"—"Because Thou art almighty."—"In what do you recognise My omnipotence?"—"In that Thou art able to do whatever Thou wilt."—"Why do you pray to Me?"—"Because Thou art my God, because Thou art almighty, because Thou art able to grant me whatever I ask of Thee."—"What do you ask of Me?"—"Lord, I ask Thee to deliver all the souls in Purgatory."—"Am I able to grant you this, My daughter?"—"Yes, Lord, if Thou appliest Thy merits to these souls."—"Do you desire, then, only judgments of mercy? and what of the justice of God?"—"Thy merits, Lord, have given more than sufficient satisfaction to the justice of God."—"Can a great sinner, then, who shall have been converted at the hour of death, after having committed numerous sins, be admitted immediately into Heaven, without himself making satisfaction?"—"No, Lord; but in view of Thy

merits, which I pray Thee to apply to him, God can deliver him from his pains and open Heaven to him."

At this moment I perceived the countenance of the Saviour assume a grave and serious aspect. "Ah, My daughter," He said to me, "how many souls are there who retard the glory which they might render to God, and neglect to profit by the means of satisfaction which I afford them for expiating all they owe to the Divine justice! They appear before the tribunal of God loaded with debts due to Him. But see how great is the charity of God towards these souls in permitting others to pray for them and thus to hasten their deliverance."

Jesus remained in my heart. An angel took me by the hand, and led me I know not where. We climbed first a very lofty height; in the middle of the plain which stretched along this height I beheld a huge circular chasm. From it there issued a dense smoke. I surveyed it in dismay. My terror was increased when I saw Jesus go forth from my heart and proceed to the opposite brink of the chasm, where a multitude of youths, bare-headed and clad in white garments, came and surrounded Him. "Fear nothing," said the angel who was guiding me; "come, follow me." The angel descended a staircase which was hewn out of the face of the wall encompassing the abyss, and I descended with him to a very great depth. There we found a closed door; the angel opened it, and I saw a great fire, larger than I had ever seen before, and in the midst of the flames a countless multitude frightfully tormented. Their condition so affected me that I shed tears, which I do not easily do, as I exclaimed: "Alas, my brethren, how great are your torments! May God have mercy on you." The angel closed the

gate again ; we re-ascended on the side opposite to that by which we had come down, and reached the place where the Saviour Jesus was, still surrounded by the youths I had seen before. They had come hither to offer to Jesus all the prayers of the Church in behalf of the souls in Purgatory.

“ Bring the great scales of justice,” said the Saviour Jesus. Two angels, followed by the Blessed Virgin Mary, brought the scales of justice. The youths clothed in white, who, I think, were also angels, placed on one side the prayers of the faithful, while the angels of justice placed on the opposite side a vast quantity of written papers, on which were inscribed the debts which the souls in Purgatory had still to pay, and the prayers of the faithful were found to be lighter than the writings deposited by the two angels.

But Mary, placing herself before her Son, laid her hand on the side of the prayers of the faithful, and their value far outweighed the written papers. Then Jesus, regarding His Mother with a look of sweetness, said to her : “ Be always the Mother of Mercy.”

The young men plunged several times into the abyss, and on each occasion drew out a victim, whom they clothed with a white garment like their own, and then presented to Mary. Mary received the soul with a loving embrace, and, putting into its hand a white paper, begged her Son to bestow upon it an eternal benediction.

This spectacle belonged, not to time, but to Eternity. The sight filled me with satisfaction and augmented the peace of my soul.

8. Of hell ; the nature of its torments.

I was praying one day before the Blessed Sacrament,

and begging God to keep me ever united to Him by charity. The Saviour Jesus let me hear His voice in my heart. "My daughter," He said, "you are quite right in praying for charity. It is the most precious possession of the soul on earth and in Eternity ; in Heaven charity alone will remain to it, but this will be sufficient to render it happy for ever and ever.

"He who has not charity is the most unhappy man on earth ; he who dies and has not charity will be unhappy in Eternity. God will separate him from Him, and plunge him for ever into the abyss of hell. Hell, My daughter, is a place of punishment which God, in His justice, created for the angels who had rebelled against Him. It is there also that He punishes sinners who die without having been reconciled to Him. Hell differs from Purgatory in that its pain is eternal, without consolation or hope.

"The pains of hell, like those of Purgatory, consist in the loss of the vision of God and in the suffering of fire. The souls which are in hell are deprived of the vision of God, they are deprived of it for ever, and this deprivation overwhelms them with its everlasting weight ; for they have no longer any hope of ever possessing Him, but the certainty of the contrary. To be eternally separated from God, to curse Him everlastingly, to experience for ever the rejection of God, to see themselves eternally in the midst of the abyss, the unceasing object of the hate and malediction of God—this, My daughter, is the greatest torment of the damned. Here, on earth, the soul does not comprehend what the possession of God is ; the body veils its eyes and attaches it to earth ; but in hell the veil has been removed from that soul, and, despite the impenetrable darkness of those regions, it sees, it

understands, that to be separated from God, to be deprived of the sight of Him for ever, is the greatest of woes.

“The damned are also subjected to the pain of fire. This fire, My daughter, has been kindled by the breath of the wrath of My Father. There is no fire that can be compared to it. This fire not only burns by its substance, but it also acts as a living and intelligent instrument of the Divine anger, to torture the souls which it encompasses and penetrates through and through. If the earthly fire appears to you so terrible that you would be unable to bear its action on any portion of your flesh for the space of an hour, what must be the effect of this far more lively fire which acts on every portion of the damned? To this fire will be joined all the torments, all the pains, all the afflictions which it is possible for them to suffer in body and in soul.

“Their sight, their hearing, their taste, their touch, will be afflicted and penetrated by the most acute and excruciating sufferings. Mind, will, memory will be delivered over as a miserable prey to fear, sadness, regret, hatred, and despair. The mind will be encompassed with thick darkness, the will crushed and broken by perpetual contradictions, and the memory tormented by the never-ceasing recollection of those pleasures of time which are the cause of an eternal woe. Everything will reproach them for the actions of their life, their contempt of My graces, and their rebellion against My laws.

“Oh, the frightful sufferings of the damned, sufferings devoid of consolation ! On earth, whatever be the misery which afflict you, whatever be the pain which tortures you, you have at least the consolation of

hoping to see your sufferings come to an end ; you have My graces to assist you in bearing them, graces which fall upon you like a beneficent dew to restore your strength and courage ; you have for your consolation the hope of Heaven, and you endure all your afflictions with patience.

“ In Purgatory it is a great consolation for the souls detained therein to have the certainty of Heaven, to think that their pains will end ; but in hell there are no consolations. God visits the damned solely in His anger, His maledictions, and His vengeance ; and the souls that are separated from Him, far from being able to hope for a term to their sufferings, have the certainty that they will never end.

“ To be damned for an Eternity, to be separated from God for an Eternity, to be tormented in the flames of hell for an Eternity—what despair !

“ How many sinners think but little of this Eternity which awaits them ! They will be surprised in their sins and their iniquities, and will awake in the hands of justice and in the flames of hell—what an awakening, what despair !

“ O My daughter, think always of Eternity. Unite yourself ever more and more to God ; grow in charity, fly hell, and prefer to have suffering, tribulation, sorrow, the Cross on earth : the way of the Cross leads to Heaven.”

9. *Of Heaven.*

The Saviour said to me another day : “ My daughter, I will open My mouth and make My voice heard by her whom I have chosen for the increase and extension of My kingdom, and who is become to Me dearer than

the finest gold, the purest diamonds, and the most precious stones. My word will be sweeter to her heart than the choicest honey.*

“I have spoken to you, My daughter, of the truths revealed by the Catholic religion, which alone is true and alone capable of encouraging, consoling, sustaining, and fortifying men. To-day I wish to speak to you of the most consoling truth of all, the reward promised to the just and to the saints.

“You cannot understand or imagine, except imperfectly, the happiness of Heaven, the glory of Paradise, the extent, the immensity of the reward which God bestows on those who serve Him faithfully. It is in Heaven that God especially dwells, albeit He is in all places; for it is there that He displays the magnificence and the grandeurs of His Divinity. It is there that He reveals Himself and shows Himself as He is, and face to face, to His elect. The soul, completely freed from its bonds, is united to God, its beginning and its end, to become one with Him, to be clothed with the splendour of the Divine Majesty by the efficacy of that admirable union.

“In the vision which it has of God, a vision not only sensible but intellectual, the soul finds its happiness, because in Heaven to see, love, and possess God is one and the same thing with being happy and enjoying sovereign felicity and supreme beatitude. It loses itself in the immensity of the Divinity, wherein it finds its everlasting repose. It loses itself in the immensity of the Holy Spirit, there to love God the Father and God the Son, and finds in this love its everlasting repose. It loses itself in the reparation of the eternal sacrifice which I offer to God My Father, and finds in My Wounds its everlasting repose.

“ It beholds My Mother, whom I have exalted to the throne of My Divinity ; it beholds the Patriarchs and all the Saints of the old and new law ; it hears the voices of the Martyrs, the Confessors, and the Virgins chanting the glory of God ; it beholds the concord, the harmony, and the peace which are enjoyed by all the inhabitants of Heaven, and it cries : ‘ My God, Thou art Thrice-Holy ! My God, Thy goodness and mercy are infinite ! My God, my life and my everlasting happiness will be to behold Thee, to love Thee, and to praise Thee for ever !’

“ In Heaven, My daughter, the soul will taste every manner of happiness, and will never be subject to any pain, any sorrow, any contradiction. Heaven is God, the possession of Him and the vision of Him. Now, God is supremely good, He gives Himself as He is : to the intellect as the eternal object of its knowledge, to the will as the eternal object of its love.

“ Heaven, My daughter, is the place of eternal reward. Merit it by your submission to My will, your love of My Father, your correspondence with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Give yourself wholly to God My Father ; live for Him on earth, that you may live with Him in Eternity. Give yourself wholly to Me, your Saviour ; I will impart to you a movement which shall surely carry you into the bosom of My Father. Attach yourself to Me ; you will rise with Me towards My Father,—and He will unveil to you His glory and magnificence, for I will present you to Him and bear testimony before Him in your favour. Give yourself wholly to the Holy Spirit ; the breath of His grace will overcome the breath of the world and the breath of Satan, and you will reach the haven of the eternal home.

“Courage, My daughter, fight perseveringly the hard battles of the present life, and lift up your eyes and heart to the holy mountains whence help shall come to you. Regret not the sacrifices which you will have to impose on yourself, the pains you will have to endure, the contradictions of life : all this will have an end, and you will find in God your boundless felicity.”

Everlasting love and thanksgiving to Jesus in the Sacrament of His Love. Amen.

B O O K X I I I .

GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL ; A FIGURE OF HIS DEALINGS WITH SOULS.

Glory and praise, love and thanksgiving be rendered unceasingly to Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost for ever and ever. Amen.

THE Saviour Jesus has taught me all I know. It is He who has manifested to my intelligence those admirable truths of the supernatural order with which it was so little acquainted ; it is He who, by means of images, figures, and comparisons, has ineffaceably engraven them on my mind. He said to me one day : " My daughter, when I was on earth, I loved to speak in parables ; I wish also to speak to you in like manner."

Now, in the divers instructions which the Saviour gave me, He often showed me how the Old Testament was the figure of the New ; how the action of God on the Jewish people was the figure of His action on souls. I will here relate all He said to me in this way, so far as I shall be able to recall it and am capable of expressing it.

I. *Noe's dove.*

" My daughter," Jesus said to me one day, " it is

related in the Sacred Books* that Noe sent a dove out of the ark, wherein he was enclosed that he might not perish in the deluge, for the purpose of ascertaining if the waters had subsided, and that the dove returned to the ark, bearing in her beak an olive branch. This dove is the figure of a solitary soul. It is not necessary, in order to find solitude, to retire into convents or cloisters ; it may be found in villages, in cities, and even in the courts of kings ; and of all solitudes the best and the most profitable is interior solitude. There are souls which need exterior solitude in order to arrive at interior ; but there are others who find themselves as solitary in the midst of the greatest stir and tumult as in the heart of a desert. The solitary soul takes her delight in retirement, for there she finds God, and God suffices her ; there she unites herself to God, and this union suffices her ; there nothing separates her from God, and this tranquillity is the sole object of her desire. To live for God, to suffer for God, to die for God, and to repose in Him : this is the whole ambition of that soul.

“She is simple and innocent as a dove, she leaves her heart quite open to God, she gives it wholly to Him. She is timid and fearful as a dove, and this fear makes her wise, it gives her the victory over her enemies, because she does not expose herself to dangers. She fears the world ; she dares not let her feet rest upon it ; she returns to her solitude, bearing the olive branch of her victory over the world, over her enemies, over herself, and enjoys, in deep draughts, the delicious sweetness of the love of God.

“The worldly do not understand the delights of

* Genesis viii. 6-12.

solitude, and are like the raven sent out from the ark, who returns not. Solitude is to them more than a mystery ; it is a source of weariness, and they expend in the tumult and agitation of earth their years and their life.

“There are some who have eyes and see not, who have ears and hear not, who have hands and handle not, who have feet and walk not, noses and smell not, mouths and speak not. But the solitary soul, like the house of Israel, has hoped in the Lord ; He is her helper and her defender. The solitary soul, like the house of Aaron, has hoped in the Lord ; He is her helper and her defender. The solitary soul, like those who fear the Lord, has hoped in the Lord ; He is her helper and her defender.*

“Moreover, God blesses the solitary soul, the soul which is retired within herself, as He blessed the house of Israel, the house of Aaron, and all those who fear the Lord, both great and small.

“Let the number of solitary souls and holy souls increase and multiply, that the Name of the Most High may be glorified in Sion and exalted in Jerusalem.”

2. *Moses and Pharaoh's daughter.*

The Saviour Jesus said to me one day: “The daughter of Pharaoh, coming to bathe in the Nile, saw exposed in the waters an infant so beautiful that she took him and had him brought up in the court of her father.† The infant grew up to be a strong and vigorous man, and delivered the children of Jacob, his brethren, from the slavery of the Pharaohs. To quit

* Comp. Psalm cxiii. 9-13.

† Exodus ii. 5-10.

Egypt he had to cross the sea with the people he was leading. He stretched forth his rod over the waters, and they stood to let the Israelites pass. When all had reached the bank, he again stretched forth his rod and the waters resumed their course, engulfing all the army of the Egyptians who were following in pursuit of the Israelites.

"The daughter of Pharaoh who went to bathe in the Nile is an image of converted sinners, who, coming to bathe in the salutary waters of penance, find therein charity, which is far more beautiful than the infant who was exposed.

"The converted sinner takes charity and plants it in his heart amidst his passions ; he nourishes it, he makes it grow and gather strength, he defends it against them, as the daughter of Pharaoh defended her adopted child against the Egyptians in the court of her father. Charity grows, it waxes strong, and, delivering the soul from its passions, it draws it out of Egypt, which is a figure of the world, that it may embrace the religious life, or from a life of dissipation and sin, to lead it into the desert, that is to say, to make it live a life all interior and retired in God. But to reach the desert, there is need to cross the Red Sea, which is the image of mortification. Man then arms himself with the Cross, and the passage of that sea becomes smooth and easy.

"When the soul finds itself thus delivered, when it has reached the firm ground of safety, it stretches forth the Cross anew, referring everything with gratitude to God ; and the passions, temptations, and Satan himself are henceforth weak and powerless against that soul, which pursues its way to the land of promise, which is Heaven."

3. *The Israelites in the desert.*

Another day the Saviour Jesus spoke to me thus :
“ My daughter, the Israelites, finding themselves in the desert without food, began to murmur against God and against Moses, who had delivered them from the slavery of Egypt.* Moses endeavoured to pacify the people, and prayed to the Lord, and God sent the Israelites, notwithstanding their unworthiness, manna to feed them.

“ Do you not recognise herein, My daughter, the degradation and ingratitude of man ? Do you not see herein the image of a converted soul which has embraced the interior life ? To prove her God deprives her of His sweetnesses and consolations, and that soul becomes impatient, she murmurs, and regrets the consolations of the world which she had renounced, as the Israelites regretted the onions of Egypt.†

“ Let those who are in affliction or in trials imitate rather the conduct of Moses. Let them place their confidence in God ; let them hope all from Him ; and He will send them every manner of good ; He will load them with all His benefits, and grace will descend upon them like heavenly manna, which will give them strength, courage, and vigour to traverse the desert of life.”

On another occasion the Saviour Jesus said to me :
“ My daughter, while Moses was receiving from God the laws which were to rule His people, the Israelites made a golden calf and worshipped it. Moses, on descending from the mountain, broke to pieces the golden calf in his indignation.

“ What folly, what ingratitude, what blindness in

* Exodus xvi; 2, etc.

† Numbers xi, 5.

the Israelites that they should act thus! Thus act the proud in regard to God. They love to be exalted, honoured, and glorified; they take complacency in themselves, and far from referring to God the good that is in them, they attribute it to themselves, as though they were the veritable authors of it. To act thus is to rob God of the honour which is due to Him.

"I will come like Moses, and break in pieces these ungrateful, blind, proud men, and they shall never raise their heads again.

"My daughter, flee pride, flee the honours and esteem of men; seek only to be humble and forgotten, and you shall not lose the only true glory, which consists in the vision, the possession, and the love of God."

4. *Moses and Josue models of kings.*

"My daughter," the Saviour Jesus said to me one day, "Josue succeeded Moses, and was placed by Jehovah at the head of the Jewish people, whom he brought into the promised land. Now, Moses and Josue may serve as models to all who are charged with the temporal or spiritual government of the people.

"They are models of kings and of all those who are established on earth to maintain justice among men. What wisdom and what disinterestedness were theirs! Their disinterestedness was the immovable foundation of their wisdom. How many potentates and princes, how many men in power, how many judges, have been stamped with the seal of folly because of their greed, —their greed of gold and silver, of ease and pleasure, the greed of their passions and vices! Woe to those potentates and kings, woe to those powerful ones, woe

to those judges ! They are exalted to establish the reign of God's justice on earth, and it is through them that injustice is everywhere paramount. They oppress the widow and orphan, the helpless and the innocent.

“ Verily, I say to you, these men are fools ; instead of bringing the people back to God, they enslave them in order to hand them over as tributaries to Satan. Let them lay their hand on their heart, let them interrogate their own conscience, and make answer to Him who asks them at every moment of the day : ‘ Do you establish the reign of justice among your people ? If you see injustice, do you suppress it to the best of your ability, or do you not rather seek to augment it ? ’ One day their conscience will rise in judgment against them, with the cry of all those whom they have oppressed.

“ Kings ought to have one only aim, one only thought, that of upholding order and justice among their people. Now, this order and this justice cannot exist, cannot be maintained, except by conformity to the sovereign order and eternal justice of God. The Lord has dictated His commandments to princes and kings, as He gave them to Moses and Josue. If, like them, they make them to be observed, they will render their people happy, and cause milk and honey to flow in abundance throughout their whole empire ; that is to say, God will bless both king and subjects, and will load them with good things, as He did the Israelites in the promised land. Good kings make good peoples, and perverse kings pervert the nations.

“ Moses and Josue are also models of those who are charged with the spiritual guidance of souls. They had to govern and maintain a gross-hearted people, stiff-necked and obstinate, and nevertheless all their

acts are characterised by wisdom, meekness, and charity. When zeal and the interests of God's glory obliged them to use severity, it was not from caprice, or from any movement of their own will, but always according to the Spirit of God, in order to bring the guilty to a sincere repentance and to make a salutary impression on the rest of the people. Moreover, they interposed between God and the people to appease the anger of the Almighty by their prayers and their tears.

"Thus ought directors of souls to do; teaching, exhorting, reproving, correcting, punishing, but always with wisdom, and, above all, praying much for those they direct, in order to mitigate the Divine anger.

"If they act thus, God will reward them, although they may have obtained but little success: for God always rewards a good will, and does not require success in order to crown His servants."

5. *Debbora.*

Here is what the Saviour Jesus said to me one day:—

"After the death of Moses and Josue God raised up leaders for His people, to deliver them from the oppression of their enemies.

"When Jabin, King of Chanaan, sought to oppress the Israelites, God gave His people for their ruler a woman named Debbora;* and this woman ruled with a powerful hand those whom Moses had found so much trouble to control. She placed herself at their head, and, marching against the Chanaanites, put them

* Judges iv.

to the rout. Sisara, who commanded the troops of Chanaan, fled away, and sought refuge in the tent of Haber, who was Jabin's friend, and there fell asleep. Jahel, the wife of Haber, took advantage of Sisara's slumbering to put him to death by driving a nail into his head. Thus God delivered His people from the Chanaanites by the agency of two women.

"What admirable lessons you may readily draw from this fact as related in the Sacred Books! See you not how God uses the instruments which in appearance are the meanest and the weakest to work wonders? It is a woman whom He sends at the head of a few men to do battle with a powerful nation. It is a woman whom He gives to the Israelites to secure to them their liberty. It is a woman also who puts to death the leader of their enemies.

"My daughter, does not God by this example take from the weak every false pretext by which they would excuse their weakness; and does He not condemn the mighty ones, who presume to depend upon themselves when so small a thing suffices to overthrow them for ever?

"Let the weak trust in God; they will be able to do all through Him who is, and who is willing to be, their strength.

"Let the powerful cease to trust in their power, and, if they depend upon it, let them do so, not as possessing this power in themselves, but as having received it from God.

"If you are weak, My daughter, come to Me; I will be your strength. If you have a feeling of strength in yourself, confide that strength to Me; it will be in good keeping, and no one shall be able to rob you of it."

6. *Gedeon.*

Here again is what the Saviour Jesus said to me :—

“God, having chosen Gedeon* to be the deliverer of His people, sent an angel to communicate to him His commands. Distrustful of himself, Gedeon said to the angel: ‘Give me a sign which may assure me as to the mission which thou givest me in the name of the God of Israel. Permit me to offer a sacrifice to God; I will return to thee.’ Gedeon went back into his house, and brought out to the angel the flesh of a kid and unleavened loaves. The angel then said to him: ‘Lay that which thou hast brought upon this rock;’ and Gedeon having obeyed, the angel touched the sacrifice with the tip of his rod, and fire came out of the rock on which the offering was laid; all was consumed, and the angel vanished.

“Gedeon’s fear, My daughter, is a figure of those pusillanimous souls which are altogether bewildered by the graces which God bestows upon them, and seem not to know what to do after receiving such benefits.

“But there was also more of prudence and wisdom than of fear in the conduct of Gedeon, who desired to assure himself as to the express will of God. Great and admirable lesson to those whom God calls to direct and govern others! No one must be ambitious of exercising either command or authority; it must be taken and accepted only so far as it is perceived to be a true call from God.

“By this it is not meant that a man ought to ask God for a miracle in order to know His will: this would be presumption. It is sufficient for him to have

* Judges vi. 11-22.

a moral certainty that the call is from God by means of the circumstances that present themselves and the clear and distinct view that he has done nothing of himself to obtain authority and command. Then he will be blessed by the Most High, provided he imitates the conduct of Gedeon, by sacrificing to God all the passions of his soul, all culpable and sinful attachments, consuming them in the burning fire of the Cross, and shedding over them tears of compunction and penitence."

7. *The Ark of the Covenant in the temple of Dagon.*

The Saviour Jesus had spoken to me one day of an unworthy communion. He added: "My daughter, they who receive Me unworthily are like the Philistines, who, having taken possession of the Ark of the Covenant, set it in their temple near the idol Dagon.* Yes, My daughter, they set Me, not only near an idol, but near Satan. Who shall comprehend the enormity of this crime and the chastisements it draws down upon him who commits it?

"You know, My daughter, that I am really present in the Sacred Host, with My Divinity and My Humanity, and with all My graces and all My merits. Now, I say it to you in truth, the sin of one who should take a consecrated Host and trample It under foot or cover It with insults, would be less than the sin of him who receives Me into an impure and defiled heart. What temerity, what insolence, what audacity!

"Yes, My daughter, an unworthy communion is the greatest of all crimes; all others are but an outrage

* 1 Kings v. 2.

against the law of God ; this is an outrage on God Himself.

“To communicate unworthily is to receive Me in order to cover Me with ignominy, insult, and contempt ; it is to call Me to be witness of a repudiation of My Divinity ; it is to take My Blood and with that Blood to sign an act of renunciation of My law, My faith, My merits, My Passion, and My Death.

“An unworthy communion is by its nature a more criminal act than that of the Jews who crucified Me. The Jews, in fact, did not owe Me so much love as does one who communicates unworthily, for I abide continually in the Tabernacle for him, I am there waiting for him in order to be his food, his life, his strength and vigour ; I am there as his God, his brother, and his friend, and he comes to abuse My love, to abuse My humiliation, to abuse My goodness. Woe to him !

“Yès, woe to that man ! What punishment, in fact, does not so abominable a crime deserve ? My daughter, even as a good, fervent, and holy communion confers on a soul graces and benediction, so also does an unworthy and sacrilegious communion draw down upon it the malediction and anger of God.”

8. *Saul and David.*

I was engaged in prayer one day, when I heard the Saviour Jesus say to me in my heart : “Saul by his disobedience incurred the malediction of God, who gave the throne of Israel to a shepherd lad named David. Saul, seeing himself abandoned by God and His people, was filled with fury against David, and sought to compass his death, but was unable to

accomplish it, for the Lord God watched over David. The latter was aware of the designs of his enemy ; nevertheless, instead of avenging himself for the persecutions he endured at his hands, for which he might have found a thousand opportunities, he never did him anything but good.

“Saul, My daughter, is the image of the sinner, and David of the just man persecuted by the sinner.

“The sinner is a king dethroned, who has lost his crown, his power and authority over himself. He is possessed by the devil, who torments him without ceasing ; and, in order to gain a moment's repose, he is obliged to regard, in spite of himself, the actions of the just man, which arrest his propension to evil, as the music of David's harp allayed the trouble of King Saul.*

“Nevertheless, the sinner, jealous of the just man's tranquillity, happiness, and calm, persecutes him by his calumnies, his detractions, his insults and contempt, seeking to lower him, oppress him, and destroy him if he could. What does the just man do ? He imitates David ; he does not oppose force to force, calumny to calumny, detraction to detraction, insult to insult, contempt to contempt. He suffers persecutions with patience, he yields, and does not avenge himself.

“This is how the poor, the ignorant, and those who are weak ought to act. God will one day deliver them from their weakness, their meanness, and their poverty ; He will take them as He took the shepherd boy, son of Isai, and establish them on the magnificent throne of sanctity, which grace shall invest with the brightest splendour, and will exalt them later to a throne in Heaven.

* 1 Kings xvi. 23.

“This is how all those ought to act who suffer persecution for justice’ sake. They shall receive the benediction of God in time and in Eternity.”

9. *The dance of David.*

The Saviour Jesus said to me another day : “David, transported with joy, danced before the Ark of the Lord, and was treated as a madman by his own wife.*

“It is thus that souls which are just, pure, and holy are transported with joy and walk full of gladness before the Lord. They seek not joy in feastings or in shows, or in merrymakings or in the pleasures of the world ; they find it in retirement at the foot of the Altar.

“The world is amazed at seeing them so joyful, and does not understand how they can be thus gladsome apart from its festivities. The world treats them as madmen ; and yet, My daughter, I declare to you, there is no true joy among worldlings, it is found only among the just and the holy. Troubles, tribulations, sufferings, nothing can deprive them of peace of heart ; and their joy remains, because it rests on a solid foundation, virtue.”

10. *The temple of Solomon.*

The Saviour Jesus said to me one day : “My daughter, King Solomon, having caused a magnificent temple to be built to God, placed within it the Ark of the Covenant, and God testified in a sensible manner that He dwelt therein.† This is why numerous victims were offered in it.

“This temple is the image of the soul of every man

* 2 Kings vi. 14-16.

† 3 Kings viii. 6-11.

who endeavours to adorn and embellish it according to his means, by purifying it from all attachment and all affection to sin, that he may place therein the true Ark of the Covenant, which is the Son of God made Man, in the Eucharist. I prefer a pure heart to tabernacles of stone or of gilded wood, I establish My abode therein with pleasure ; and God, My Father, manifests in this heart His presence and Mine—for He is everywhere where I am—by the thoughts, desires, and works of him in whom We come to dwell. How many also are the sacrifices offered to My Father by him who receives Us and in whom We abide ; sacrifices of the heart, sacrifices of the will, sacrifices of the passions, sacrifices of self-love ! It is a victim which is immolating itself without cessation.

“How great is the beauty of this soul ! It far surpasses that of the temple of Solomon, and this must needs be so. What will be the shame which one day will overwhelm those who shall discover how much their sentiments differ from those of the Jews ! These shall cover them with confusion, and rise up to condemn them at the last day.

“Receive Me, then, often, and according to the counsel of your director. I shall be in you the true Ark of the Covenant between you and My Father, and nothing shall break this alliance, which shall endure for ever.”

II. *The Madianite enemies of the Jews.*

He said to me also : “The Madianites were the enemies of the people of God ; they ravaged and desolated their lands.* They are a figure of the passions

* Judges vi., vii.

which are, as it were, the enemies of man. When God admits a soul by baptism into the true land of promise, by expelling sin from it and giving it grace, He does not drive out the passions and the inclination to evil so completely as to leave man no more work to do. No ; man has always to remain united to God.

“ If he rebels, God again gives him over to the Madianites, that is to say, to his passions, to his irregular impulses, to his evil propensities, to his sins. It is only when he is brought to repentance and contrition that God delivers him, as He delivered the Jews when they returned to Him.”

12. *The Jewish captives in Babylon.*

Another time He spoke thus to me : “ My daughter, the Jewish captives in Babylon turned themselves unceasingly towards Jerusalem, sighing after their country and longing to see themselves united once more in the Temple of the Lord. It was thus that they preserved themselves from the idolatry of the Babylonians.

“ It is the same with the Christian soul. Man in the beginning was at home, because he was without sin ; but his rebellion drove him out of the state of grace and banished him to the Babylon of sin, of disgrace with God, and the loss of Heaven. I came to deliver him, and, beholding the effects and disasters of sin, beholding what he possesses by grace and what awaits him in Heaven, he exclaims : ‘ By the rivers of Babylon, there sat I and wept, when I remembered Sion. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither, let my tongue cleave to my jaws.’ Then, considering the world and its abominations, he says to

it, personifying all its crimes: 'Blessed is he who shall take thy little ones and dash them against the rock.'*

"My daughter, grace is liberty, the life of grace is the life of liberty; sin is the slavery of the soul. Be free, and some day you will enjoy life in Heaven, your true country."

13. *Nebuchodonosor.*

Here is what the Saviour Jesus said to me one day:—

"Glory and grandeur so dazzled Nebuchodonosor that he imagined his power to be above all power. To punish him, God brought him down, not only to the level of the lowest of his subjects, but to that of the irrational animals, giving him the same shelter, the same covering, and the same food.†

"There are men who do not push their pride and insane arrogance so far as to have, like this prince, incense offered to them, but they greedily accept all the honours, all the praises which are awarded to them, and, instead of referring all to God, take everything to themselves. All is pride in them: in their gait, their looks, their words, their thoughts, their actions. God will rise up against them and will bring them low, not to the level of animals devoid of intelligence, but to the level of the demons.

"If you desire always to have part in the benefits of God, live in humility, and the benefits which He will bestow upon you in time shall be only the foretaste of the goods which He will give you in Eternity."

* Psalm cxxxvi. 1, 5, 6, 9.

† Daniel iv. 30.

14. *Assuerus and Esther.*

Another day the Saviour Jesus spoke thus to me :
“My daughter, King Assuerus having resolved to destroy the nation of the Jews, Mardochai counselled Esther, his niece and the consort of Assuerus, to beg that the Jewish people might be spared. She presented herself before the king, and, seized with fear, fainted away. The king at once lavished every attention and care upon her, and for a while she revived, but fell again into a swoon. Then, moved with compassion, the king promised to grant her whatsoever she should ask.* It was thus that Esther was able to save her people.

“My daughter, I say to you in truth that it is sometimes sufficient for one single soul to present itself before God in fear and trembling, and address to Him its supplications, to arrest His avenging arm already raised to smite a whole nation.

“Pray, My daughter, pray much for France ; the number of its iniquities increases every day ; pray for her, and disarm the anger of My Father. Unite yourself to the pious and holy souls who make to Him their ceaseless supplications. If God watches over France and protects her, notwithstanding her iniquities, it is solely from regard to the numerous prayers and supplications which are addressed to Him and which ascend before Him to appease His wrath.”

15. *Conclusion.*

It is thus that the Saviour Jesus has been pleased to instruct me ; sometimes by examples, at other times

* Esther v. 1-6 ; viii. 3, 4, etc.

by figures and images, and again by the clear and distinct view of what He had already taught me or was pleased Himself to teach me.

I have tried to express everything in accordance with what I found imprinted on my heart and memory. There are probably many instructions which He gave me but which I have not included in these papers. I have endeavoured to supply them by the letters I wrote to my director, which, in fact, are only a continuation of the instructions contained in my papers, or of those which I sent him in writing on the very day I received them.

I have written as things occurred to my mind. What I know is, that the Saviour promised from the beginning to instruct me in the true science, the science of salvation. There ought, therefore, to be, in what I have written in obedience to my director, and also in obedience to my Saviour, wherewithal to satisfy the desire of any mind which is intent on its salvation and any soul which aspires to God. It will be easy to supply what is wanting ; it will be very easy to arrange my writings in such a way that they may be given to the faithful and be productive of much fruit.

This is the promise which the Saviour Jesus made me, when He spoke to me in almost these very terms : "My daughter, it is I who inspired your director to require you to write down what you experienced and what you heard. I enjoin you to obey him, as you have done up to this day. It is my desire that the instructions I have given you should be communicated later to the souls which have a devotion to My Sacred Heart. Preserve them all most carefully. I desire to use you as an instrument, and I will make your name

famous among those who are devout to the Sacrament of My Love. Nevertheless, pride not yourself on My favours. Of yourself you know nothing ; all you have is from Me: wherein, then, will you glory ? I forbid you ever to speak of what you have experienced to any one except your director and to those who shall have the direction of your soul. Deliver up your manuscripts without reserve to him who is your director at the time. He will keep them till the hour I have fixed, and which I will make known to him for communicating them to those souls which have attached themselves to Me as their only real good here below."

I have acted according to the injunctions I received. I have done so, and have had no other desire in doing so except to accomplish the will of God. Indeed, I have had but one desire, that of rendering, so far as might depend on me, glory, honour, and praise for ever to Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of His Love. Amen.

LETTERS SUPPLEMENTARY.

LETTERS

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LETTER I.

Necessity of a director.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

You have asked me whether the voice which addresses me had ever spoken of my director in such a way as might form the subject of an instruction, and I have already answered in the affirmative.

The Saviour Jesus, for it seems to me that it is indeed He who speaks to me, has given me several instructions as to my conduct towards my director, and I have recorded them in my papers as occasion offered. But, besides this, He has spoken to me on the subject of my director in quite a special manner from the time that I first had the happiness of hearing His voice. He spoke to me three times consecutively on this matter and in the following order: first, of the necessity of a director; secondly, of the manner of dealing with him; thirdly, of the qualities of a director.

I will here relate the first instruction, *viz.*, on the necessity of a director.

"My daughter," the Saviour Jesus said to me one day, after Holy Mass, "I have often enjoined you to

speaking to him who directs you of what you experience in your relations with Me ; but you have never asked yourself the reason of this injunction. Later you will understand it. Neither have you ever asked yourself why you have, not only a confessor, but also a director in him to whom you disclose the secrets of your soul. I will explain this to you and show you its necessity.

“ Ever since the rebellion of the first man all mankind have been plunged in darkness ; they have eyes and nevertheless they are incapable of guiding themselves in the road that leads to God. Life, in fact, is beset with dangers, perils, pitfalls ; the enemies of man encounter him everywhere upon his path ; and this is why he has need of some other light besides that of his own eyes or his own mind in order that he may walk securely. Thus it is that all men ought to have the aid of directors or counsellors for pursuing their journey towards Eternity.

“ Such is the will of God. Man sinned by pride and chose to walk by his own light ; he is punished in that wherein he sinned, and to the end of time he will walk in the way of salvation guided by the light which others give him.

“ You know how it was at the beginning of the world. The heads of families were the counsellors of the whole household ; and, as they could not find in their children the counsellors they needed, God Himself made His voice heard, and lent them His lights and His counsels. Such were the heads of families, the patriarchs, the lawgivers, the judges, the prophets, and the priests of the people of God. The counsels of these men inspired by God were the light of the people.

“ When the time was fulfilled, I Myself came to

be the universal counsellor of mankind. I came to restore to them light, truth, and life. I communicated this light, truth, and life to My Apostles, and it passes from generation to generation by means of the priesthood of those whom I have chosen to be My ministers ; enlightening minds, feeding them with the only true nourishment, vivifying them, and carrying them on each day by a more vigorous and generous life to the very centre of that life which will never end.

“ Man ought, therefore, My daughter, to avail himself of a counsellor or director, because it is thus that God has disposed the commerce of the supernatural life.

“ Behold man, My daughter, in the intercourse of natural life : he consults, he seeks advice, counsel, and light ; were he the most learned, the most enlightened, the wisest of men, he distrusts himself and has recourse to others. With greater reason does the supernatural life require a man to act thus, if he desires to walk straight in that life, and not lose himself, or take the wrong road.

“ You understand, in fact, My daughter, that the supernatural life is of far greater importance than the natural life, which is only for time, whereas the other is for Eternity. This is why, if you look into the supernatural world, you will see that all the saints, the greatest doctors, the very doctor of the Gentiles himself, when he had been struck down on the road to Damascus, ask counsel and light of others to lead them to God.

“ I alone am able to dispense with counsel and light because I am the light and counsel of all ; but all mankind are obliged to follow the light of others and not their own light and their own counsels.

“The most learned men and those who are wisest in the direction of others are like blind men on a road alone and without a guide, when they choose to walk according to their own wisdom. They grope along, they go slowly on for a few days, and then they fall down the precipice. For man is blind in what concerns himself, he easily mistakes what is faulty and defective for what is good and virtuous, and this mistake is the cause of his fall and death. He falls because he has no one to guide him ; he dies because there is no friendly hand to withdraw him from the precipice.

“You must clearly see, My daughter, that if God has willed that all men should have a director, and if a director is so necessary that even without the express will of God all men ought to have had one, how important it is to be directed in the road of salvation by another guide than yourself.

“Yes, My daughter, you have need of a director, that he may teach you that of which you are ignorant : the knowledge of salvation, the knowledge of the supernatural life. Although out of My goodness towards you I choose to instruct you Myself, it is necessary that you should submit My instructions to your director in order that you may learn from him, and know with certainty that you may receive My instructions and conform yourself thereto, because they contain nothing contrary to the truth as regards the object of your faith, your hope, your charity, and the actions of your whole life. You fear to be the victim of illusions : who shall re-assure you but your director ?

“You have need of a director, that he may exercise you in the practice of all the virtues, that he may

point out to you the means of avoiding sin, and guide your discretion in the performance of your duties to God.

“You have need of a director for the increase of your merits for Eternity and your crown in Heaven, through your obedience and submission to all that he shall prescribe you. Obedience to the voice of your director will give you a greater resemblance to Me, who always did on earth the will of My Father.

“You have need of a director because life is full of miseries, tribulations, and trials; you require therefore a word of consolation in your tribulations, and assistance to fortify you in your conflicts. Now, this is what you will find in your director.

“In fine, My daughter, you have need of a director because you are, like all the children of Adam, the victim of sin, prone to evil, liable to offend God.

“Follow, then, the lights, the counsels, the instructions which you will receive from your director. Be not troubled if I have deprived you of him who was the first to guide you in the way. I say it in truth, you will one day bless My providence for having placed you in the hands of him whom I have sent you.”

Such, Monsieur le Curé, was the first instruction. I will communicate the other two in the course of the week; my occupations do not permit me to write them down to-day.

I present you, Monsieur le Curé, my most respectful sentiments, and pray you to believe me

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 1st May, 1842.

LETTER II.

Conduct in regard to a director.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

Here is the second instruction which the Saviour Jesus gave me. Therein He taught me how I ought to conduct myself in regard to my director.

“My daughter,” He said to me, “I wish to teach you how you ought to conduct yourself towards your director. There are two modes of acting, one interior, the other exterior; the first consists in the interior sentiments of your soul, the second in your actions or exterior relations.

“What ought to be your interior conduct in regard to your director? By what ought it to be regulated? By sentiments of faith and religion, My daughter.

“Your director is invested with My priesthood, that is, with the highest dignity which it is possible to communicate to a man. He is a priest, he holds My place, he acts as I should Myself act, he has all My powers. Consequently you ought to regard Me as living in his person; you ought to honour Me by honouring him, respect Me by respecting him; hearken to My voice by hearkening to his, obey Me by obeying him; in fine, you ought to have for him sentiments of the greatest and sincerest gratitude; you ought to love him as the spiritual father of your soul, as your guide, your counsellor, and your saviour, for he continues to perform for you that office of saviour which I communicated to him, as I communicate it to all My priests.

“These sentiments will also be the rule of your

exterior conduct. If you act with faith and religion, you will manifest yourself to your director with simplicity, telling him all you know, hiding nothing from him, disclosing to him your secrets and your most interior troubles, you will speak to him as to God, whom you would not wish to deceive, because He knows everything, even your most secret thoughts; you will speak to him as to God, that is to say, as to your father, with entire and absolute confidence, hoping everything from him, and abandoning yourself to him with the conviction that he will do what is best to enlighten you, and succour and aid you in the conflicts or trials of your life. You will submit to his will as to My will. You will not dispute with him. You will rely on his wisdom. You will be in his hands like an instrument gifted with intelligence to perform whatever shall be prescribed to it.

“Nevertheless, it is permissible for you, in certain cases, to offer an observation with all humility and deference, but you must always do so with the intention of not persisting and of following the will of your director after he has heard what you have to say.

“By acting thus, My daughter, your conduct will be irreproachable, it will be full of merit, and you will gain the reward I have promised to those who hearken to My word. I will come to you and I will make My abode in you.”

It was thus the Saviour Jesus bade me behave to my director. I do not know whether I have acted thus under all circumstances, but my most earnest desire is always to conform myself to this instruction. Yes, Monsieur, I wish to submit myself in all things to whatever you shall be pleased to advise or enjoin me. I desire to have no other will but yours.

As regards the candour or simplicity with which I may disclose to you all that passes within me, I assure you that my decided intention is to hide nothing from you, and if at any time I do not tell you everything it will be that I have forgotten it.

Permit me, Monsieur le Curé, my most revered father in our Lord Jesus Christ, to offer you all the sentiments of respect and filial piety, which the Saviour has enjoined me to entertain for you.

Your very humble and obedient servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 5th May, 1842.

LETTER III.

The qualities of a director.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

The third instruction which the Saviour Jesus gave me was on the qualities of a director.

“My daughter,” He said to me, “a director ought to show the way, consequently he ought to be prudent ; he ought to teach the truth, consequently he ought to be learned ; he ought to fortify the supernatural life, consequently he ought to be full of charity.

“Prudence is the first quality of a director. Without prudence how could a director avoid the stumbling-blocks which strew so thickly the path of life ? How could he adopt the most appropriate means for arresting evil, avoiding sin, banishing tepidity, forming a piety at once sincere, solid, and firm ? Without prudence how will a director be able to counsel souls

in all their varied circumstances? Must he deal with a sinner as he would with a person already advanced in perfection? with a weak soul, as with a soul full of vigour? Without prudence he will be a false guide to the souls he directs; he will not show them the right way which leads to God.

“The second quality of a director is knowledge. Knowledge ought to be joined to prudence. They are mutually a help and a succour to each other. A director may have a certain rectitude of judgment, a certain natural wisdom, which will permit him in ordinary cases to be useful to the souls he directs, but, if he is not learned, will he not find himself impeded at every step? Will he not be like a blind man leading another blind man, when both will fall into the pit? How will he be able to show the truth, if he does not know it himself? How will he be able to judge, if he does not know what judgment he ought to pronounce?

“It is to the director of souls that the Holy Ghost addresses Himself by the mouth of the prophet when he says: ‘Be instructed, ye that judge the earth.’* Nothing is so necessary to a director as knowledge, for without knowledge he ruins others and ruins himself. Woe to souls that are directed by an ignorant man! Woe to ignorant directors of souls!

“My daughter, a director ought to be full of charity. He ought to live in the charity of God, that he may impart to others the life of charity. Charity makes him just, virtuous, zealous: just, and by his justice permits him to labour for the justice of others; virtuous, and by his virtue permits him to engage

* Psalm ii. 10.

and exhort others also to its practice ; zealous, and makes him forget all else, so that he may think only of the salvation of souls. He does not think of his own advantage, his own happiness or peace. His repose is to weary himself in seeking the wandering sheep, and bringing it back to God ; his repose is the salvation of that soul. He sacrifices himself, and his only desire is to sacrifice himself more and more in order to save souls.

“Such are the qualities of a director. Of himself he cannot be prudent, learned, or virtuous ; or, rather, his prudence is only folly, his knowledge only ignorance, and his virtue only human virtue and without foundation. It is God who gives prudence. A director ought to ask it of Him every day in his prayers, in order that every day he may see it increase and grow to the profit of the souls which he directs. It is God who gives knowledge ; above all, the knowledge of salvation. A director ought to ask it of Him in his prayers, in order that he may be always able to enlighten the blind whom he may find on his way. It is God who gives charity. A director ought to ask it of Him every day, that he may labour without ceasing for the salvation of souls, that he may communicate this virtue to them, and thus effect a perfect union between God and souls.

“All the qualities of a director are included in these three qualities. Happy are these souls whose director is prudent, enlightened, and virtuous ! Let them hearken to his voice ; they will walk in the way of truth.”

Such, Monsieur, were the three instructions which the Saviour Jesus gave me respecting a director. I do not know if I have omitted anything. I have

repeated all I could remember, and as well as I could express myself.

Receive, Monsieur, the assurance of my filial obedience, and of the profound respect with which I am

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 7th May, 1842.

LETTER IV.

The necessity of advancing in goodness. The motives and means of this advancement.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

It was thus the Saviour Jesus spoke to me, or, if it be not He, it is some one whom I do not know and whom I cannot make known. I cannot say more, except that He has always the same voice, always the same features, and has held converse with me since the time I mentioned.

These are the words which He said to me: "My daughter, your life ought to be a life of progress in goodness and the love of God. It ought to resemble a light the brightness of which increases more and more. This is why, when I was on earth, I enjoined men not to look back but ever to go forward.

"I will show you the necessity of this progress. You have given yourself to Me, you have consecrated to Me your heart, your mind, your soul, all that is in you, all that belongs to you. You promised to love Me all the days of your life, and to use all your

endeavours to increase and augment your love for Me. The promise you made yesterday binds you to-day, and will bind you to-morrow and for ever. A promise like that you have made to Me cannot and ought not to be annulled.

“I have lavished on you My most signal graces ; I converse with you with the familiarity of a father with a child, I make light to shine in your soul, I console you in your troubles and afflictions, I uphold you in your weakness, I unveil Myself before your eyes, I let you see a part of My glory in Heaven, every day I pour down upon you My paternal blessings, and I ask from you only one thing, that you should advance in the practice of goodness and the love of God. Can you refuse Me what I ask of you when I refuse you nothing, when I even forestall your desires, when I grant you what you never could have hoped to obtain, because of your unworthiness ?

“I have given you an example, My daughter, that you might do as I did when I was on earth ; you ought therefore to live in such a way that one day you may have this testimony rendered to you : ‘She increased in wisdom, in age, and in virtue before God and man ; she passed along doing good.’

“Besides, My daughter, a soul cannot remain in the same state, it must advance in goodness or sink back by sin ; for he who does not gather with Me scattereth, and to scatter is a wrong done to Me, which stays the flow of My graces and draws down the wrath and vengeance of My justice.

“In fine, you ought to advance and make progress in goodness and the love of God, because I have enjoined you to do so. I have said to you what I said to My Apostles : ‘Be perfect as My Heavenly Father

is perfect.'* Now, to this end, you must of necessity be ever making progress, because you will never find on earth a term to your perfection, and there will always remain a long way to go. Never stop, therefore; walk onward; do not dread fatigue, and you will find rest to your troubles and to your toils.

"To this end, My daughter, you ought to regard yourself every day as though you were beginning and had as yet done nothing; you ought to forget the faults you have corrected, think only of what you have still to correct and have still to do; you ought to forget the testimonies of love you have given to God and seek how you may love Him still more.

"To advance in goodness and the love of God, you ought to correspond to all the graces He gives you, you ought to detach yourself more and more from the world and from yourself, and give yourself more entirely to God.

"To advance in goodness and the love of God, you ought to distrust yourself, to keep always before your eyes your weakness and helplessness and rely only on God and on the succour of His arm.

"In fine, to advance in goodness and the love of God, you must will it: if you will it, you will make progress because such is the will of God. If God wills it, He will give you the means; if you will it, you will reject none of these means, and your life will be truly a life of progress."

Such are the words I heard; I repeat them to you as faithfully as I can, and I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, to accept the sentiments of my sincere veneration and my most profound respect.

* St. Matthew v. 48.

I cannot recommend myself too much to your prayers that God may be pleased to have pity upon me and never permit me to be separated from Him and from the love which I owe Him.

I am, with the most entire devotion, Monsieur le Curé,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 28th May, 1842.

LETTER V.

Of good example.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I wish to hide nothing from you, but on the contrary to make known to you everything I see, everything I hear, everything I experience. I will now submit to you what He who speaks to me from time to time, during my prayer or at Holy Mass, has said to me about good example.

“My daughter,” He said to me, “I have often repeated these words to you: ‘I have given you an example, that you might do as I have done.’ To-day I wish to instruct you respecting the good example which you ought to give to others.

“To give good example, My daughter, is, as the very term denotes, to be an example to others for good. I am the prime example of good; I am the supreme good; I became incarnate to manifest good to men. All My actions during My life were a manifestation of good. I ever acted according to what is good, I could not act otherwise without ceasing to be

God. This is why I said with authority to the entire world : 'I have given you an example, that you might do as I have done,'* and on another occasion, addressing Myself to the Pharisees, I said to them : 'Who among you shall convince Me of sin?'+ They are bound to act like Me, that is always to submit their will to the will of God, always to seek that which may be pleasing to God, to live united with God by the faithful fulfilment of His law and by the most ardent charity.

"My daughter, you ought to give good example, and you will give it by walking in My footsteps, by following the example which I have given you. To give good example is to serve as a pattern to others, not only in avoiding evil, but also in doing good, and by doing this good lead others to do good also.

"A good action is like a brilliant light which shows the good to the eyes of those who act according to what is good and keeps them in that way, and which shows it also to those who are doing ill in order to make them understand their misery in so acting.

"A good action is a stay and a support to the good, as also to those who are not so : to the good, because it keeps them in the right way ; to the bad, in order to withdraw them from evil and aid them in walking towards good.

"A good action has a force and an influence more powerful than the strongest and most authoritative words : this is why I began by giving good example before teaching.

"Good example is the best preaching. Now all can and ought to preach, not by word, but by example.

* St. John xiii. 15.

† *Ib.* viii. 46.

I have chosen only a few souls to preach by word, but I have enjoined all men to preach by good example, and they who preach by word ought to do as I did, preach first by example.

“You ought to give good example in all your exterior actions, by always maintaining reserve and modesty, restraining your eyes, so as never to let them rest on aught that is unbecoming or impure ; by being guarded in your words, so as never to say anything which can hurt your neighbour or offend God, but always to speak what is conformable with charity, and the love of God and your neighbour ; by always walking according to the light of faith in your undertakings, your works, and your determinations ; by eschewing everything that evinces attachment to the side of the devil, the world, the flesh, and sin, and observing everything that is agreeable to virtue, to Holy Church, to your Saviour, and your God.

“Never act, My daughter, with a view of being seen, considered, or approved by men ; never act from self-love or for personal gratification, but always with the intention of not scandalising others, and of bringing back to God as far as lies in your power, by such actions as are good and conformable to the Divine Will, those who are estranged from Him. Thus you will acquire a double merit : that of your own actions, and that of the good actions with which you inspire others.”

I conclude, Monsieur le Curé, by commending myself to your prayers and renewing to you the assurance of my most respectful sentiments.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, *2nd June*, 1842.

LETTER VI.

Of scandal.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

One day, after Holy Communion, the Saviour Jesus spoke thus to me of scandal :—

“My daughter,” He said, “one of the things which I most strictly enjoined on My disciples during My life was the avoidance of scandal ; I say it again to you. The world shall be accursed because of its scandals. Woe also to the man who gives scandal !* ”

“Scandal is the bad example given to others by a word or an act which is not, wholly or in part, conformable to what is right.

“Scandal is any bad action committed by others after, and in consequence of, hearing a word or witnessing an act which is not, wholly or in part, conformable to what is right.

“Scandal, in fine, is any bad action committed by others under the false pretext of a word that has been heard or an act that has been witnessed which is reckoned to be culpable, although that word or that act may have had nothing in it but what was innocent.

“He who performs an act or utters a word which is culpable, or bears the appearance of being culpable, with the intention of drawing his neighbour into evil, is guilty of the first kind of scandal, even though his act should remain without effect. He also is guilty of that kind of scandal by the word he utters or the act he performs, even though he had no intention of scandalising, if by that word or that act he draws his neighbour into evil.

* Comp. St. Matthew xviii. 7.

“He who hearing an unseemly word, or witnessing a criminal act, lets himself be drawn into speaking or acting in the same manner is guilty of the second kind of scandal.

“He who hearing a good and blameless word, or witnessing an act which has in it nothing but what is conformable to good, chooses to put a bad construction upon it in order to act criminally is guilty of the third kind of scandal.

“I call the first kind of scandal infernal scandal, because he who gives this scandal imitates the devils in labouring for the ruin of souls. This is the kind of scandal of which I said : ‘Woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh !’*

“I call the second kind of scandal the scandal of children, because children are more liable, on account of their weakness or their ignorance, to let themselves be drawn into evil by witnessing it, or because they who let themselves be drawn into evil by the sight of it are weak like children. It was for the avoidance of this scandal that I said : ‘He that shall scandalise one of these little ones who believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.’†

“I call the third kind of scandal the scandal of blindness. It was of this scandal that I said to My disciples regarding the Pharisees, who were scandalised by My words : ‘Let them alone ; they are blind and leaders of the blind.’‡

“These three kinds of scandal are sins more or less grievous according to the greater or less deliberation

* St. Matthew xviii. 7.

† *Ib.* verse 6.

‡ *Ib.* xv. 14.

of him who wishes to draw another into evil ; according to the degree of culpability in the act which is the cause or the occasion of sin ; according to the magnitude of the fault into which another is made to fall ; according as the bad act which is unjustly based and grounded on another act which has nothing criminal in it is more or less opposed to the rule of right.

“ See, My daughter, how great a sin the first kind of scandal is. I insist strongly upon this scandal, because the scandal of children is but the consequence of infernal scandal, and the scandal of blindness is not really scandal at all.

“ In fact, he who scandalises offends God by the evil act he commits. He rebels against God, he breaks the yoke of the Lord to stoop beneath that of Satan. Nor is this all : at the same time that he is a rebellious child of God he is an active minister of the prince of darkness ; he is his visible agent on earth in his work of destruction and eternal ruin to souls. His act is a seed of death cast into souls ; it is a stone thrown on the road to Heaven to precipitate into hell those whom it strikes ; it is a net which catches and holds fast in evil him who has not strength enough either to break through it or avoid it. His act is a homicide, not for time, but for eternity. O My daughter, woe, woe, a threefold woe, to him who gives scandal !

“ I Myself will take vengeance upon him. I will demand an account of him for all these souls for which I shed My blood on Calvary, for which I died upon the Cross, and which he has destroyed, has delivered over again to Satan and buried eternally in the abyss of hell.

“ These souls were My property, they were the price of My blood ; he robbed Me of them, woe be to

him ! My blood shall rest upon his head, and shall fall upon his brow more terribly than on that of the Jews who shed it.

“ I will confront the scandalous with all the fury of a father whose child has been slain, of a ransomers who has been robbed of him whom he had saved, of a God who receives his maledictions and the maledictions of others when nothing but love, praise, and thanksgiving were due to Him. What reply will he make to My wrath, what reply will he make to My paternal love incensed against him, because he has separated from Me for ever souls which I cherished as their God and Saviour ? Will he be able to endure the severity of My countenance ? Will he be able to endure the reproaches of My voice ? All external nature will cry for vengeance against the scandalous, and all that is in Me will be manifested to him as exercising this vengeance. Henceforth between him and Me there will be an everlasting separation. O My daughter, woe, woe, a threefold woe, to him who gives scandal !

“ My daughter, fly from scandal as one of those sins which most afflict Me. Never let there be anything in your words, in your looks, in your dress, in your bearing, in your actions, which might scandalise your neighbour. Often there needs but a little thing to scandalise a soul and ruin it for ever.

“ Dread lest you should have a share in the maledictions which I have denounced against the world and its scandals. Give no scandal ; on the contrary, repair even the scandals of others who ought themselves to make reparation for them and do not.”

It was thus the Saviour Jesus spoke to me. His voice was loud and terrible as thunder, when He was threatening the scandalous, and penetrated my very

soul. I was seized with fear ; but He reassured me, bidding me unite myself to Him, and remain attached to Him, for by acting thus I should never give scandal.

I should be very blamable and very ungrateful to the Saviour Jesus if I could ever forget myself so far as to scandalise any one. No, never will I do so willingly ; and may I never give scandal involuntarily and by reason of my weakness and inclination to evil. To this end I commend myself to your fervent prayers.

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, my revered father in the Lord, the offering I make of those sentiments of profound respect and entire obedience to all your wishes with which I am

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 8th June, 1842.

LETTER VII.

Of the union of soul and body. How the soul is the life of the body. Union of the powers of the soul. Of the part taken by each faculty in constituting sin.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

The Saviour Jesus gave me one day an instruction which I will now submit to you. This is what He said to me, and these are His words as I remember them :—

“My daughter,” He said, “I wish to explain to you what has never been explained to you, to wit, the union of the soul with the body ; the way in which

the soul animates and vivifies the body ; and the relations which exist between the several powers of the soul.

“The soul is a spiritual being, which has neither body, nor shape, nor colour, so that it can never be the subject of the senses. It is indivisible, because it is spiritual ; it is the vital principle of the body : separated from the soul, the body is without life. Now, as God is the vivifier of all things, and everything which has life has received it from Him, the soul comes from God. It is, therefore, eternal in its principle,* since it comes from God ; it is eternal also in its end, for it will never have an end.

“God made the soul to His own image and gifted it with qualities which bear a relative resemblance to His own Divine attributes. The soul thinks, judges, knows, wills, because God wills, knows, judges, and thinks. It has received a likeness of the immensity of God by its agility, which enables it to run in the twinkling of an eye from one end of the earth to the

* This is but another rendering of what St. Augustine has said in his Paraphrase of the 44th Psalm : “ Quidquid facturus erat Deus jam in Verbo erat ; neque esset in rebus nisi esset in Verbo.” There is, therefore, nothing incorrect in saying that the soul, like all other creatures, is eternal in principle. Is it not a received doctrine in the theological schools that God, the primary cause of all possibility, contains in Himself from all eternity, eminently and virtually, the contingent beings of which He is the efficient and final model-cause ? So far from teaching that the soul is eternal in itself, or an emanation of the Divine Substance, Marie Lataste makes our Lord speak thus : “ God made the soul to His own image ” ; and (B. vi. S. 3) “ He drew you out of nothing ” ; and again (B. xii. S. 4) “ Your soul, My daughter, is immortal. It does not create itself, it comes from God ; but God creates the soul full of life, and the life which God gives to the soul is an immortal life.” *Note of Jesuit Examiners.*

other, and permits it to transport itself from earth to heaven and from heaven to the depths of hell.

“The soul is a spirit endowed with faculties. To this spirit God has given an instrument for the exercise of its faculties; this is the body which it inhabits, which it vivifies and animates, and which it moves according to its pleasure.

“The body has many members, which have each their own particular use and are all animated by the soul. The soul is indivisible; it is as much in the smallest part of the body as in the largest; it is there whole and entire. Yet there are not several souls in a single body: there is but one soul, although the body has many parts.

“This is why, when a man loses one of his members, an arm, a leg, an eye, or any part of himself, unless that part be an essential part, like the heart or the head, the soul remains whole and entire in the body, although it no longer acts in the part which has been removed. It would still act in the member removed but for its removal; if it acts no longer, it is because this member is no longer united to the body and consequently no longer subject to the action of the soul.

“The soul inhabits the whole body, but its special seat is the head and the heart. Thence it diffuses its influence throughout the whole body, it makes itself present in all its parts, it vivifies them all, it sets them all in motion, it governs them all. This is why, if a man be deprived of his head or his heart, the soul, which now has lost its principal seat, separates itself from the body, which remains without life.

“The soul (to employ a comparison) is like a circle, whose radii belong to the circle and make only one

with the circle ; all the faculties belong to the soul and make but one with it.

“The different faculties of the soul are the imagination, the memory, the understanding, the will, and the reason.

“The imagination is that faculty of the soul by which it represents to itself things or objects ; and this shows you how close is the relation which the hearing and the sight have with it. The imagination conveys to the memory, with which it has an intimate union, the objects it has seen or the things it has heard. The understanding is like the council-chamber of what takes place in the soul. It sees things, considers them, examines them, and presents them to the will, according to the judgment which it forms of them. For its counsellor and its light it has the reason.

“The reason and the understanding must be in agreement ; otherwise no one can act aright. The reason without the understanding can do nothing, and the understanding without the reason cannot walk in the right path. The understanding receives the lights of reason and those of God. When the lights which God communicates are greater, clearer, or more evident than those of reason, the understanding ought always to prefer them. When God leaves the understanding to the light of the reason it ought to guide itself by that light.

“When the understanding has passed judgment on a thing, it presents it to the will, as to the queen and sovereign of the other faculties. If that which is proposed pleases it, the will accepts it ; if it is disagreeable to it, or if it mistrusts it, it refers it back to the understanding and requires a second deliberation. The understanding searches anew in the

memory and the imagination, and tries to make what it presents accepted.

"The devil always hastens to take a part in the council held by the faculties of the soul; he endeavours to fill them with his darkness and make the issue of the debate accord with his views.

"But the will has a censor, a witness of its acts, a voice which tells it whether they are good or bad, whether it may accept or reject what is presented to it; and this is the conscience.

"If the will acts against the dictates of the conscience, the latter raises its voice, which is none other than the voice of God, and is loud in its bitter and unceasing reproaches. If the will acts according to the dictates of the conscience, harmony and peace are maintained among the faculties of the soul, because they are regulated in accordance with what is right. When the conscience is satisfied, all the faculties of the soul enjoy peace and tranquillity; when it gives utterance to reproaches, all is full of trouble, because the conscience causes remorse to spring up in the soul.

"Thus, then, when the understanding consults the will, the will ought to listen to the voice of conscience and act in accordance with that voice.

"Such is the union of the faculties.

"I will now speak to you of the spirit. The spirit is the most subtle and most spiritual portion of the imagination. It is the breath which puts in motion all the other faculties of the soul. The spirit is that which most taxes the will and gives it the greatest trouble; for, notwithstanding all its care and vigilance, it is often not mistress of it; the spirit escapes from the will and the will is unable to restrain it. The spirit

transports itself whithersoever it pleases : no distance, no doors or walls are any obstacle to it ; it goes up into Heaven, it goes down into hell ; it even penetrates into the hearts of others ; it is always in motion ; it never has a moment's repose. When it is away from the faculties, they are calm and tranquil ; if it re-enters, it puts them all in motion ; it occupies them all ; it sets them all working and acting.

“ The will is more or less mistress of the spirit, according as it gives it less or more liberty.

“ There are different kinds of spirits. Some are restless, inconstant or light, others heavy and sluggish ; these are lively and penetrating, while those are thoughtful and cautious. All have in them the spiritual and subtle portion of the imagination, but all have it not in the same degree ; hence their diversity.

“ If the spirit, as I have said to you, sets all the faculties in motion, from it also proceed, as from a primary interior source, all the acts of those faculties.

“ The seat of the spirit is in the head and the heart ; it is there it performs all its operations ; in the head by ideas, in the heart by thoughts.

“ When an idea is formed in the spirit, the latter presents it to the memory, which communicates it to the understanding. The understanding consults the reason, and then it judges according to the lights which it receives from God, from the reason, and from the spirit. When it has formed its judgment it presents its decision to the will ; the will presents it to the conscience, which it consults as its censor. The conscience, by the lights it receives from the understanding and the intimate relation subsisting between them, makes its sentiment known to the will, and the

will acts according to that sentiment in order to be at peace, or else it appeals to a second deliberation. The president of the council is the same as has presented the idea to the spirit and has formed it within it ; to wit, God, the devil, or the spirit itself, each endeavouring to have the victory.

“ All the ideas which come from God are good ; those which come from the devil are evil or tend to evil ; those which come from the spirit are indifferent. They have not all the same intensity in good or in evil, because the spirit which elaborates them has not in all men the same strength, the same vigour, or the same energy. The spirit derives its strength from God who bestows it, but it increases it with the knowledge it acquires by study and application. When the spirit seeks to increase its strength all the faculties lend their aid, and then, in its turn, it imparts to them the knowledge it has acquired in order to advance their perfection.

“ The spirit originates in the imagination and consequently has its seat in the head, where that faculty of the soul resides. It has its seat also in the heart by thought.

“ The thoughts, like the ideas, are various in their origin. They come from God, from the devil, from corrupt nature, or from the spirit itself.

“ From whichever of these sources thoughts come, they are presented to the will, which delivers them over to the understanding, just as ideas are, in order to be judged. This interior transaction is called reflection, consideration, or meditation.

“ Since there are several sources there must be several kinds of thoughts. Those which come from God, being formed by the inspiration of His grace,

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are all good. Those which come from the devil, from corrupt nature, or from the inferior part of the soul, are evil, or tend to evil ; those which come from the spirit are indifferent ; they become good if they are taken possession of by God, His grace, and His Spirit ; evil, if the devil or the impulse to evil obtains dominion over them.

“Now, for all thoughts, as also for ideas, it is not necessary to be always taking counsel ; the will alone, by the lights and the knowledge which it receives from the understanding, accepts or rejects them, according as it believes itself bound to do. It would be too arduous and too wearisome a labour for all the faculties of the soul to hold council and pass a separate and distinct judgment on every idea and every thought.

“This council takes place only when it is a question of great thoughts, serious and important thoughts. In other cases the will acts like an advocate who gives his advice in affairs of small importance according to the lights he has in his mind, and does not perform the part of a regular pleader except before the judges and the tribunal of justice.

“The spirit is independent of all the other faculties, and the will rules over all. The will, however, reigns more in the heart than in the head, because the heart is where it resides.

“The will is queen and mistress of the other faculties, but it must itself have a master, and this is God or Satan. God and Satan dispute its possession ; they both solicit its preference. So long as the will deliberates it is subject to violent struggles. God and Satan each plead their cause before it, displaying the advantages to be obtained by adopting their respective

sides. Now, as God never deceives He shows not only the advantages but also the troubles and difficulties which will have to be encountered under His banner. The devil, on the contrary, shows the roses and hides the thorns ; he speaks of pleasures and enjoyments, he says not a word about the troubles and tribulations with which he drenches those who listen to him. God speaks to the will by the movements of grace, by the consolations of virtue, by the advice and the counsels of wise men and especially of His ministers. Satan speaks to the will by the pleasures and vanities of the world, the bad examples, the words and conversation of depraved men, and their scoffings at religion.

“The reason and the conscience come to the aid of the will and give it counsel. The reason is the light of the will ; the conscience is the voice which bids it guide itself according to that light. The conscience and the reason have the closest relations with each other. They are almost always in agreement. Do good, avoid evil ; do not do to another what you would not wish him to do to you ; render to every one his due : such are the principles and sentiments of conscience.

“If the will acts against the conscience, the conscience reproaches it. The conscience is the instrument of God, as corrupt nature is the instrument of Satan. When the will acts in accordance with the conscience, that is to say, in accordance with God, whose organ it is, it incurs the hostility of the devil, of the world, of corrupt nature, or the inferior part of the soul, but God gives it grace and assistance to enable it to triumph over its enemies. God withdraws His graces from him who takes the side of the devil ; He pursues him with remorse ; for it is written : ‘There is no

peace to the wicked.’* To side with conscience is to walk in the path of virtue, for conscience is the marvellous germ which develops good in you. To follow the way of corrupt nature is to walk in the way of vice, for corrupt nature is the lamentable germ which develops evil in souls.

“Such are the struggles and the conflicts which the faculties undergo in regard to God and to Satan. Woe to the soul which accustoms itself to yield the victory to Satan against God. The last conflict will end in death to itself and victory to God. Happy the soul which ever attaches itself to God! It will speedily have worsted its enemies, and God will illuminate it with His light, He will fortify it with His graces, and will ever regard it with an eye of complacency. The devil will strive, but in vain, to trouble it; peace is found in the service of God.

“When the will rebels against God the conscience becomes the witness for God, and memory the book in which this rebellion is inscribed, a rebellion which is more or less culpable according as its consent is more or less perfect and the matter more or less considerable.”

You will form what judgment you please of this. I was aware that the Saviour had greater lights to impart to me thereon, and I confess that of myself I am incapable, not only of acquiring them, but even of knowing what I have just written if He had not Himself taught it me. In His goodness He taught me them, and I retained them naturally and without difficulty, as my eye receives and retains the light of the sun in the day time, and my ear receives and

* *Isaias* xlviii. 22.

retains, so far as is needful, the words which it bears pronounced. His instructions are imprinted in me as easily as the impress of my fingers on soft wax.

How is this done? I do not know, but it is so, and I submit to the will of God as I submit to your will, which cannot and ought not to be different from the will of God, seeing you are invested with the sacerdotal character, according to the order of Melchisedech, like Jesus Christ my Saviour. I am the child of God by baptism; I am also your child in God, and you represent to me the authority of God Himself. Consequently I ought to submit to your will, to await, hearken to, and follow all your determinations. Now, for this end I ought to show myself to you such as I really am, and hide nothing from you; and this is what I do.

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of the most respectful sentiments with which I am

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 11th July, 1842.

LETTER VIII.

*Of widowhood. The duties and obligations of a widow.
The Catholic Church the model of widows.*

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I am going to submit with confidence to your judgment the instruction I have received on the state of widowhood.

“My daughter,” the Saviour Jesus said to me, “the

wife is subject to her husband, and owes him obedience so long as he lives. Death alone can break her bonds, but it breaks them completely, so that she may contract a new marriage, for she is free. If she cannot preserve continence, if she does not feel in herself sufficient fortitude, strength, and courage to remain chaste in her widowhood, let her bind herself by a fresh marriage. But let her take heed not to seek this new union solely for the satisfaction of her passions; let her marry in order to please God by the observance of His laws and His commandments and the purity of her soul. To this end, she may seek to please him whom she has chosen for her spouse; but in so seeking let her not forget that she must maintain a greater gravity of behaviour than if she had not been married, and ought never to allow herself anything contrary to the will of God. She ought to conduct herself in the manner I have indicated when speaking of the relations that ought to subsist between persons who are affianced. Such, My daughter, is the right of a widow; she may marry a second, a third, a fourth time, if she becomes free once, twice, or three times by the death of her husband.

“Nevertheless, My daughter, it is a great glory to a widow not to contract a second marriage but to remain faithful to her spouse, although he be dead. Besides, if she has a true affection for him she has lost, although the bodily ties are broken, she will not wish to sever and break the ties of the heart; she will use the liberty that has been given her only to serve God with more fidelity and advance more and more in virtue.

“What reasons could a widow give for marrying again? Her youth, her weakness, her desire for a stay

whereon to lean? But is there anything in youth to make a second marriage obligatory? Does weakness entail any such obligation? Is it marriage, then, that gives strength, or rather the Most High, who is styled the mighty God, the Omnipotent? Is it the desire of a stay and support? Ought she, then, to lean on an arm of flesh? Can she hope to find a sufficient support in one who himself has need of being supported? Ought she ever to prefer the support of a man, who is too weak to support himself, to that of God, who upholds the whole world?

“Without doubt, as I have already told you, it is lawful for a widow to contract a second marriage, but, in truth, I say to you that it is far more perfect for her not to do so, and more becoming that she should bury herself in retirement in memory of her spouse who is buried in the grave.

“There are few who understand these words: happy they who understand and practise them! Happy the widows who, from the first day of their widowhood, put on garments of mourning and sorrow only to quit them for the white winding-sheet of their tomb! Happy the widows who live in such wise that all who behold them say not only ‘This is a widow,’ but also ‘This is a Christian widow’! Happy the widows who are thus made a spectacle to men and to angels by their modesty and reserve!

“A widow ought not to seek to please the world by the fashion or the richness of her apparel. She ought not to live, as the world lives, amid noise and tumult. She ought not to seek worldly assemblies or frequent public walks and places. Her sole occupation ought to be to seek to please God. She ought to shun all exterior show, all personal finery and adornments, and

occupy herself only with rendering her soul more and more beautiful, more and more adorned with virtues, more and more inflamed with the love of God. All her beauty ought to be interior. Little does it matter that men do not see or discern the light with which her soul is resplendent. God will see it, and this ought to suffice her.

“Nevertheless, there ought to be nothing unbecoming in a widow. Let her always be dressed in a manner suitable to her condition, but with simplicity and without pretension.

“A widow, more than any one, ought to understand that the pleasures of life are fleeting and transitory, that everything on earth soon vanishes away, that no earthly joy is of long duration, and that consequently she ought not to attach her heart thereto. She is not, however, to be deprived of joys, satisfactions, contentment, and peace ; she will find them, not in the flesh, not in the senses, not in the world, not in the animal and earthly life, but in God, who is the joy, happiness, contentment, peace, and consolation of souls. Let her attach herself to God, and God will give her in her chaste and pure life those chaste and pure delights with which He inebriates souls whose eyes are fixed on Heaven.

“God is never wanting to souls which take Him for the lot of their inheritance, which abandon themselves to Him, beg His assistance and support, give Him the name of Father, and regard Him as such. He is especially the God of widows and orphans ; that is to say, He watches especially over them. Widows and orphans have, in fact, little assistance and support on earth, but they have the support and assistance of God ; God guards and protects them,

and delivers them from all danger. Who, then, shall afflict one whom God consoles? Who shall assail one whom God defends? Who shall threaten one whom God protects?

“A widow ought to put her whole trust in God and abandon herself to Him, walk in His presence, and strive with a great desire after perfection. To this end she ought to watch over her house, and over her temporal interests, not to attach herself thereto, but to make the most befitting use of them and that which is most in accord with those pious and charitable sentiments which God puts into her heart. She ought not to remain idle. She ought to work in accordance with her condition. She ought to nourish her heart with good thoughts, holy desires, sentiments of love towards God and her neighbour, and do good works according to her ability and leisure. She ought to watch carefully over her chastity, fly all dangerous occasions, keep her reputation untainted and secure against all detraction. She will succeed in this if she is guarded, and watches over herself, if she is modest, reserved, retired from the world. All unjust detraction, all calumny, will fall of itself, should she ever become its victim through the malice of the wicked.

“A widow ought not to forget that chastity to her, as to all, is a gift of God; she ought therefore to ask it of God frequently, every day, never to believe herself stronger than she is, remembering that all flesh is weak, and that God alone grants victory over the passions and sustains the human heart in goodness, truth, and virtue.

“God will never refuse what she asks with a pure and upright heart; He will strengthen her, He will render her immovable like a pillar of brass.

“A widow, My daughter, possesses a perfect model of the manner in which she ought to comport and conduct herself during life. The Church, which I purchased by My blood and have established on earth, is My bride, I am her Spouse. Now, since My Ascension My bride has remained a widow because I am ascended up into Heaven. Nevertheless, I am with her and shall ever be with her by the Sacrament of My Love and by My graces, but I shall be with her after a visible manner only in Heaven. Now, My daughter, what does the Church do? She has her eyes constantly fixed on Me. Her heart is united to Me by indissoluble ties. She lives in the fidelity of the love she has sworn to Me, and she will persevere to the end. She is not attached to the perishable goods of this world. I am her riches, her all. She longs only for the moment when she will possess Me. She asks only for the eternal consummation of our union in the Kingdom of My Father. She passes on her way doing good.

“Let widows act thus; let them attach themselves to God, and spend the rest of their life in the practice of good.

“What I have just said to you, My daughter, of a woman who has lost her husband, I say also of a man who has lost his wife. He may marry again; he will do better not to contract a second marriage. Let him act as I have indicated in the case of a widow, for a man, like a woman, has a soul to save, a God to love and adore. Like her he has duties to fulfil. Happy he who is faithful and walks in the fear and love of God!”

Such is the instruction which the Saviour Jesus gave me. I think I have repeated pretty nearly all He said.

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my profound respect.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 15th October, 1842.

LETTER IX.

Signs by which to recognise the Spirit of God in visions and revelations.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

The Saviour Jesus said to me one day : "A fear is entertained that it is not My Word that you hear. In order to undeceive or reassure those who direct you, I will show you the difference between a person who is deceived by the devil or led astray by his imagination, and those who are guided by the Spirit of God. Communicate to them My teaching on this subject, and then let them judge regarding you without fear of being deceived.

"My daughter, what are the signs by which the source of the extraordinary things which take place in a virtuous soul is ascertained ? I am about to show you. If the devil or the imagination is the source of the marvels manifested in a person, he will still remain virtuous, at least exteriorly. But examine his conduct and his way of acting ; you will speedily discover therein a secret pride, a certain touchiness, an attachment to his own experiences, and very little docility. He will be wanting in sweetness, gentleness, meekness, humility, and simplicity. If he obeys it will be from

pride. If pride does not find any aliment in his obedience he will not obey. He will talk freely and with pleasure to everybody of what he experiences; or he will hide it, and say nothing of it, not even to his director; he will make use of evasions and artifices, and will be deficient in straightforwardness and simplicity. These signs are unmistakable; a person who is proud, disobedient, hypocritical, and false, is not one who is led by the Spirit of God, but by the inclinations of his own corrupt nature.

“Those, on the contrary, who are guided by the Spirit of God are humble, submissive, and united to God, indifferent to everything, free from self-will, and obedient in all things, without seeking or requiring a reason for the directions they receive. They do not speak to any one about what they experience; they abide in the oblivion and silence of their hearts; nevertheless, they speak of it to their directors, and this is the first movement with which I inspire their souls.

“Some speak of it with facility, but always with that humility which is the distinctive sign of My Spirit and of My Heart. Others speak of it only with difficulty; nevertheless they do speak of it, and acquire more merit by overcoming the repugnance they feel in mentioning what passes between them and Me.

“The director of such persons will naturally wish to test them. He will even subject them to very hard and difficult trials. They will endure all without complaining and with an admirable patience, because they will always have My example before their eyes. Nothing will repel them; they will submit to everything. They will do to-day whatever they are ordered

to do, and will cease doing it to-morrow if they are prohibited from doing it. They will act less from themselves than in obedience to the will of their director. They will trust his word as though it were My word, and will have no confidence in themselves.

“By these signs it will be ascertained whether it be the spirit of Satan or My Spirit which is operating in these persons ; whether the movements be those of corrupt nature or of My most signal graces. Sometimes it is My Spirit which is at work in a soul, as a labourer tills the family field ; but the devil seeks to sow therein the cockle of his own spirit, and to stifle the good which I have wrought in that soul.

“Here is the way in which the devil proceeds ; listen to Me attentively :—

“The devil, My daughter, does not act in the same way with all kinds of persons. He studies the disposition, the inclinations, the strength, or the weakness of each ; he takes note of the state of souls, their love for Me, or their lack of affection, and then he skilfully commences his work.

“He sees a pious person enriched with those graces which are so admirable and so much admired in saints. What does the devil do ? He endeavours to lead that person to vanity, to make him fancy that he must needs be something great because he has received such signal graces. If he is repulsed he is not discouraged, he returns to the charge, and plies him so vigorously that if this soul does not promptly apply a remedy and have recourse to Me under these circumstances, the breath of the demon will be to him like leaven causing him to ferment in rebellion against his Saviour with a pride the most culpable and most criminal.

“Another person receives like favours. What will

the devil do? He will tempt him to keep them concealed, to speak of them to nobody. Thus he will trouble that person's peace and repose, and by means of this disquietude will turn him away from God and from virtue.

"What will the devil do in regard to another who is similarly favoured? He will urge him to speak freely of the graces he has received, and talk about them to his friends. These will spread abroad the news, and thus the esteem in which he is held will be increased. He will become sensible of this, and, without suspecting it, will admit the germ of pride which the devil will be quick to slip into his soul. He will believe himself to be exalted above others. Poor soul! pride will have brought him down lower than earth, and separated him from God.

"At other times the devil will transform himself into an angel of light; he will simulate My language and My manner of speaking, in order to get dominion over a soul, and then he will insinuate into it error and falsehood, which are the sources of all sin.

"In fine, My daughter, when a person is virtuous and experiences the benefits of My grace, without, however, participating in those favours which I grant only by a peculiar effect of My goodness, the devil makes use of all his natural dispositions for his destruction. If his imagination is lively and his temperament ardent, he will conjure up before him visions of some sort, persuading him that he receives revelations, and so strong will be his belief of this that there will be no means of convincing him to the contrary. The devil will avail himself of his negligence, his imprudence, his too great familiarity, in a word, of everything that may be faulty in him in order to draw him on to his destruction and ruin.

“All these persons ought to tell their director what takes place within them ; without this they will infallibly fall into the snares of their greatest enemy. The director will know if they are in the good way according to their obedience and submission to his counsels and advice. If they do not listen to the voice of their director, they are not led by My Spirit. If they conceal what is said to them, and if he who speaks to them enjoins them to say nothing to their confessor, they are not led by My Spirit, it is not My voice which they hear ; for I have never prohibited any one from speaking of what I have said, at least from speaking to those who are the directors of such souls as it is My pleasure to teach.

“Write down these words, My daughter ; the reading of them will be useful to many souls deluded and deceived by the spirit of lying. Write them down, and he who directs you will clearly see what is the source from which they have emanated. He will see therein a stamp of sincerity and truth which do not belong to Satan, but only to Incarnate Truth, God Himself.

“Let him judge you, and say frankly in his turn what he thinks of you and of him who speaks to you.

“Go in peace, My daughter ; your director well knows that it is I who speak to you. Long ago he would have put an end to the trials he imposes upon you. It is through the movement of My Spirit that he continues them, and that his director induces him to continue them.”

I have told you all these things, Monsieur le Curé, with the greatest and most perfect confidence. I have also told them to you out of obedience and submission. I do not pretend to teach you anything, for

of myself I know nothing. I do but report to you what I have heard. You will judge thereof as it may please you, or, rather, as you ought to do for the glory of God and the salvation of the soul of your daughter in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Receive, Monsieur, the assurance of my fullest respect and perfect esteem.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 20th June, 1843.

LETTER X.

How a soul ought to act in regard to the extraordinary favours which it receives from God.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

The state in which I had found myself for some time past caused me some disquiet. During my prayers, during Holy Mass, and at my communions, I was, so to say, without any sentiment. I was completely absorbed by an ineffable sweetness which filled my whole soul and hindered me from reading as well as from praying, compelling me to follow the attraction of this sweetness. I spoke of it to the Saviour Jesus, and said to Him: "Lord, I know not what it is I feel, nor in what state I am; do Thou, who knowest, deign to enlighten me, to instruct me, and teach me in what manner I ought to act."

"Yes, My dear daughter," the Saviour Jesus replied, "I know you, I know what you experience, I know what you are. You are still but an apprentice, a

young novice, who do not know as yet how you ought to conduct yourself in the new way into which I desire to make you enter. This sweetness which fills your soul and, like a gentle slumber, sets it to sleep that it may repose in God, while your body remains without motion and your heart without action, under the weight of this beatitude which penetrates while it unites you to Me, is a grace which it pleases Me to grant to you, and which, far from saddening you or causing you trouble, ought to excite your liveliest gratitude towards your Saviour. Enjoy this sweetness whenever you experience it; follow the attraction which it will give you, and which has produced it.

“This, My daughter, is how you ought to receive this sweetness and this attraction; how you ought to follow it, and to act when you experience it.

“I have already spoken to you of prayer. It is a conversing, a communing of the soul with God by words, by sentiments, thoughts, and affections; in a word, it is an elevation of the soul towards God. This elevation ought to be operative; that is to say, it ought to be an offering to God of the homage of the soul, and the begging Him for His grace, for this is the end of prayer.

“When you find yourself without sentiments or attractions in prayer, endeavour to move yourself to good ones by some pious reading or consideration. If you feel yourself unable to read or to fix your mind on any good thought, but immediately experience this sweetness and attraction, which give you a savour of God, although it be unaccompanied by any sensible feelings or thoughts, continue in this state: this state is a degree of perfection in prayer, and this prayer is more or less perfect according as the degree of repose

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is also more or less perfect. This is the state of the blessed in Heaven : repose in the vision and love of God.

“ Now, My daughter, you must grow and increase in this new way, of which you have not yet passed through the first degree. Arm yourself, then, with vigilance and humility ; wanting these, you will sink instead of rise, and will come to resemble those souls which, after having soared as eagles up to Heaven, fall down to earth, becoming like to the meanest animals. Be vigilant and be humble : vigilant, in order to advance ; humble, in order to abide in the friendship of God and in truth, which will tell you that in yourself you are nothing. Be circumspect also, that you may not allow yourself to be seduced or led away to vain, useless, or evil things ; for it is only holy things which lead to God.

“ This way is not only an unknown way, but it is also as perilous as all other ways. It is perilous ; it is possible therefore to make deplorable falls in this way, and consequently the soul must be watchful, it must be on its guard, and take its repose only in God and on God. It is an unknown way ; God alone can give the knowledge of it. It is impossible for the soul to discover it by itself, or to walk in it if it be not enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit. Now the Holy Spirit shows it to, and leads into it, only certain privileged souls.

“ Since this way has been opened before you, My daughter, follow with humility and circumspection the attraction which draws you to it. I will sustain and enlighten you ; when you are in need of My help, call Me, and I will hasten to you. Whether it be during Holy Mass or after Communion, during prayer

or meditation, always follow the attraction which may be given to you ; but follow it in the manner I have taught you, that is to say, by occupying yourself with God and with what belongs to God, and reposing in Him. If you do this be not uneasy, for you will be acting aright.

“My daughter, in all your actions seek rather to do God’s will than your own. Seek rather the good pleasure of God than your own pleasure. Let Him lead you by this way or by that way ; what matters it to you, provided you are doing His will ?

“O Marie, My dear daughter, you are little on earth, but I will give you an exalted place in My kingdom. Communicate all that passes within you to your director, and follow his advice. Whatsoever you may experience tell him all, and then remain calm and tranquil.”

Here, Monsieur, is what I wished to submit to you, that I might beg you to grant me the assistance of your prayers. I have experienced, and shall continue to experience, their salutary effects, because I believe them to be inspired by the charity you entertain for me. I cannot express all my gratitude to you, but you know that God will not leave without recompense what you do for the humblest of His servants.

I pray you to receive, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of the high consideration with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 25th July, 1843.

LETTER XI.

Description of the Admirable Tabernacle wherein Marie receives the greatest favours from God.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

It is in a spirit of entire submission that I am about to lay before you what I have experienced for some time in my new way of life. It seems to me that my soul has entered on a new life, in the centre of light and of interior and spiritual knowledge. This marvellous centre appears to me like an apartment which is neither large nor small ; it is closed, but not by any wall, for all therein is spiritual. This new apartment into which my soul retires the Saviour Jesus has taught me to call the Admirable Tabernacle. I perceive within it a great Cross from twelve to fifteen feet high, the Christ upon it being of the natural size. It rests on a beautiful pedestal which seems to be of marble as well as the Cross, but which, nevertheless, is not, because all there is spiritual. There is in this Admirable Tabernacle, as it were, a living atmosphere of lights, of communications, and of sentiments drawing the soul to God. It is impossible to enter without being all penetrated therewith. Now, I have clearly discerned that these lights, communications, and sentiments proceed from the Cross of the Admirable Tabernacle, as from an inexhaustible source.

I cannot always penetrate at pleasure or remain as long as I please in the Admirable Tabernacle, but I am sometimes permitted to enter, and to taste and receive the instructions given therein, although without words. This is one of the most signal favours which the Saviour Jesus can grant me. He grants it to me in order to give me more force and vigour to operate

what is good ; for I feel this force and vigour penetrating and encompassing me within and without in such a manner that nothing afterwards can deprive me of it.

You will have a difficulty in understanding what I mean by instructions without words ; what I mean, Monsieur, is, that in the Admirable Tabernacle my soul sees things so clearly, whether with regard to God, Jesus Christ, and Mary, or as respects myself and religious truths, that it is instructed as if it were listening to language. Often it sees without comprehending, but it tastes with sweetness the astonishing mysteries presented to it. At other times, an invisible power hinders me from entering into the Admirable Tabernacle, or compels me to leave it as soon as I have entered.

O Monsieur, how good is this Saviour Jesus ! Who will enable me to humble myself to confusion in thanksgivings before Him, and give to Him for ever my mind, my heart, my soul, and all that I have ?

I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, to be pleased to accept the assurance of my most profound respect and entire submission to your judgment, to which I submit everything.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 1st August, 1843.

LETTER XII.

Jesus on the Cross shows us the enormity of sin.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I will now lay before you, with the same un-

reserve, and the same confidence, what you have required of me with respect to my meditations on the Passion of the Saviour Jesus.

I hardly know how I shall be able to express myself and tell you the things which I have heard without a word being uttered, and which were more the effect of a flash of light than of words clearly and distinctly articulated.

For these meditations I never made use of any book, neither did I ever prepare them beforehand. I had already meditated on the Passion in the way I have told you elsewhere; the Passion is the most ordinary subject of my meditations. It is an inexhaustible fountain to which I am drawn by an irresistible attraction, and from which my soul derives strength, courage, and power to do good and avoid evil.

Now, one day I knelt down to make my meditation according to the attraction which should be given me. When I do not prepare my meditation, it is not that I would tempt God by this omission, but I am obliged to follow the attraction which carries me elsewhere, and constrains me even to quit the meditation which I might have prepared to follow another. Sometimes God sends me occupations which prevent me from preparing my meditation the evening before. This is a sign to me that the Saviour undertakes the charge of my meditation, or that I am to remain humbly at His feet, sometimes without any sentiment of love, until it pleases Him to have pity on me.

After I had knelt down at the Saviour's feet, immediately I felt in my soul an attraction which led me almost irresistibly to contemplate Jesus fastened to the Cross. Ah, Monsieur, I do not know what then became of me. While my body felt a most oppressive

weight to me, my soul seemed to be endowed with new life. It was in the centre of the light and knowledge of the Admirable Tabernacle. O my God, what light, what illuminations! I beheld them at once collectively, but I could not then endure them in their details; they inundated my soul, which was fain to withdraw and wait till the morrow: which makes me suppose that the Saviour was pleased to show me first, as it were, a general plan of the meditations which He desired I should afterwards make separately every day. This at least is what actually happened.

Here is the general plan as I apprehended it:

1. Jesus on the Cross makes us understand the greatness and enormity of sin.
2. Jesus on the Cross is to us the model of all virtues.
3. Jesus on the Cross manifests the justice and mercy of His Father.

On the first day I was able to meditate on the first part: Jesus on the Cross makes us understand the greatness and enormity of sin.

In my first consideration I viewed sin in itself and in its intimate nature; in the second I beheld the injury and outrage which it does to God; lastly, I comprehended the cause of all our evils, spiritual as well as temporal. With what a depth of knowledge, with what a blaze of light, my soul was enveloped at this happy moment! It was not an articulated word that I heard, but I understood better than if I had been listening to the most learned man and the most eloquent preacher. It was a word without a voice, and a voice without a word; and I have no word to express this voice, nor voice to express this word. I saw, I heard, I understood; I should endeavour in vain to recall it, I could not do so. It was more powerful, more tender, more sensible, more sweet,

more painful, more sad, more intelligible, more impressive to me than anything in the world. It is now so deeply graven in my heart that I find myself unable even to give it external utterance in writing or in speech. O Jesus on the Cross, salvation of my soul ! O Cross of Jesus, salvation of the world ! O Jesus on the Cross, God dying for my sins ! O Cross of Jesus, deliverance from my iniquities ! O Jesus on the Cross, Repairer of the injury done to God ! O Cross of Jesus, splendid and glorious pledge of the forgiveness of God the Father ! O Jesus on the Cross, Liberator of the human race ! O Cross of Jesus, buckler against Satan, the world, and our passions ! O Jesus on the Cross, felicity in our sufferings and troubles ! O Cross of Jesus, rainbow of the compassion of God ! O Jesus on the Cross, it is my sins which have caused Thy death ! O Cross of Jesus, it is my sins which have reddened thee with the blood of my Saviour ! O Jesus on the Cross, let me be ever near to Thee, with Thee, in Thee ! O Cross of Jesus, may I embrace thee for ever, and die pressing thee to my heart !

I could not remain any longer in the Admirable Tabernacle, the dazzling light of which compelled me to retreat. Before leaving it I heard a voice, loud as thunder, pronouncing these words, which were spoken to me, and which I have retained : " My daughter, repeat every day this prayer : ' O my God, remember that moment in which for the first time Thou didst pour Thy grace into my heart, washing me from original sin that Thou mightest receive me into the number of Thy children. O God, who art my Father, grant me, in Thine infinite mercy, through the merits and the Blood of Jesus Christ, and through the sorrows and dolours

of the Holy Virgin, the graces which Thou desirest that I should receive this day for Thy greater glory and my salvation.' ”

This, Monsieur le Curé, is what I experienced that day. I will continue writing the rest in my leisure moments.

I pray you to accept the assurance of my veneration and the profound respect with which I am,

Monsieur le Curé,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 7th August, 1843.

LETTER XIII.

Jesus on the Cross, the model of all virtues.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

The consideration of Jesus on the Cross as the model of all virtues occupied me for several days in the Admirable Tabernacle. Every day there were communicated to my soul divers lights and illuminations respecting each of these virtues, together with an exceeding desire to possess them. They were not instructions like those which I ordinarily receive. I have already told you that in the Admirable Tabernacle I hear neither the voice nor the words of the Saviour, but I see, I comprehend, I have an understanding of what is presented to me, and I would wish always to behold these things, always to rest my mind upon them, and take my repose therein.

Moreover, it is impossible for me to endeavour to

express to you what I have experienced regarding the love of Jesus Christ for His Father ; a love which makes Him assume a body and a soul like to ours, to live a life like to ours, and which makes Him die upon the Cross to offer to God a sacrifice worthy of Him ; or regarding the entire and perfect submission of the Saviour Jesus to the will of His Father, through which He sacrifices His own will to do that of His Father, or His infinite desire for the reparation of His Father's glory, or His abandonment and unlimited confidence in God His Father, into whose hands He commits His soul when dying. It is impossible for me to endeavour to express to you what I have seen of the love of Jesus Christ for all men, for His executioners, for me, and to show you the picture of light which formed itself round that word, which I saw in characters of fire in the Heart of Jesus—"I thirst." It was the thirst for our salvation, for the salvation of poor sinners, with which He was devoured. He would have wished to be able to say to all what He said to the good thief : "To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." That was the desire of His Heart, an immeasurable desire, which he manifested in that word of a God dying for the redemption of men—"I thirst." Vainly should I endeavour to express the humility of Jesus on the Cross, of that God who is sovereignly great and exalted, abased amidst sufferings and death. Vainly should I try to express His obedience, which made Him submit to His executioners ; His patience, which prevented Him from complaining ; His meekness, which made Him in His sufferings the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.

Each of these virtues of Jesus on the Cross kept

me a day in prayer before my Saviour. That is all I can say. If I wish to write, my pen stops, because the power of expression fails me ; if I wish to speak, my tongue remains, as it were, immovable. It is impossible to render sensible by exterior word a word which is insensible and interior. I am unable to give expression to instructions which I received in the splendours of a light emanating from the Cross, by means of conventional signs proceeding from the lips of men, and called words.

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my profound gratitude, and my perfect respect and veneration.

I have the honour to be,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 9th August, 1843.

LETTER XIV.

Jesus on the Cross makes known to us the justice of His Father ; and this knowledge is the terror of the impenitent sinner. Jesus on the Cross manifests also His mercy.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

It is with the most entire and perfect submission that I desire to conform to your will. You bid me make an effort and endeavour to find some mode of expressing what I experience in my meditations on the Passion.

I am about to make the attempt, and will do the best I can. Forgive me if I do not do it in such

manner as you would wish, and let my good-will plead in my excuse.

After meditating on Jesus on the Cross as the model of all virtues, I beheld unrolled before me the sequel of the general plan which I traced out to you. Jesus on the Cross makes known the justice of His Father, and this knowledge is the terror of the impenitent sinner.

This subject detained me in the Admirable Tabernacle three days at the hour of my meditation.

You know, Monsieur, and, indeed, you see how clearly the justice of God was manifested in Jesus on the Cross, since, in order to make Him satisfaction, it is a God made Man who dies upon that Cross. I will not dwell on this point. Besides, in my meditation, this view of the Divine justice executed on Jesus upon the Cross blazed only for a moment before my eyes ; and I suppose it is because it is an unfathomable mystery that I was not permitted to dwell upon it. For three days my mind and heart were directed to the terror with which Jesus Crucified must inspire the impenitent sinner.

Jesus on the Cross is the victim on whom God has exercised the rigour of His justice and the severity of His judgments. Now, Jesus was just, and there was in Him only the semblance of the sin for which He came to die for the salvation of the world. What, then, ought the impenitent sinner to expect, who will not renounce his sin, and whom death will strike at an hour when he is least thinking of it ?

Such is the general view which I had before me the first day on which I was permitted to enter into the Admirable Tabernacle in order to behold therein the justice of God manifested in Jesus on the Cross.

Here is the view in detail, or the instruction which my mind derived from this view :—

Jesus was just, holy, and incapable of sin. The Heart of Jesus could not feel the impression of any vice, of any evil inclination, or of any the slightest imperfection ; whereas the saints, even the greatest saints, through an effect of corrupt nature, have had experience of these impressions, although they did not become the victims of them. The Divinity which filled His Heart enclosed therein the perfect sanctity of God, and consequently repelled everything which was not holy, and prevented it by infinite barriers from approaching Him.

The Spirit of Jesus was enlightened with the very light of the Divinity, which divinised It ; that is to say, it gave to It the most entire conformity and the greatest participation in the sanctity of God, so that It might be the Spirit of the Man-God.

The Soul of Jesus was filled with the Divinity, which communicated Itself to It in so intimate a manner that the Soul of the Saviour was wholly absorbed in the Divinity, because one with It, and yet without confusion and still preserving all Its powers and all Its faculties distinct from the Divinity. The Soul of Jesus was like that of other men, endowed with the same faculties, understanding, memory, will, and reason ; but in the Saviour Jesus these faculties were divinised.

The Body of Jesus was pure and holy ; for His Soul, being full of graces, possessing all virtues in a degree infinitely more exalted than it is possible to conceive, participating in the perfections of the Divinity, and being Itself divinised, could direct the Body only after a Divine manner. For it is the soul which guides the

body, making it act and operating by it what it wills. Now, the Soul of Jesus, being divinised by Its union to the Divinity, divinised the Body of Jesus by Its union with It. In the Body of Jesus were the Divinity of the Word of God and the Soul of Jesus divinised by Its union therewith ; and the Body, the Soul, and the Divinity were so perfectly united that they formed but one only Being, or one only Person, the Person of the Son of God made Man ; a Person just, holy, and incapable of sin. In Jesus there are three substances : the Divine substance, the substance of the soul, and the substance of the body. These three substances make two natures, the Divine Nature and the Human Nature. These two natures make one only Person, the Person of the Son of God made Man, who is called Jesus Christ.

Man must necessarily possess a body and a soul. If he had only a body, he would not be man, he would be a machine without life, a statue without movement. If he had only a soul, he would not be man, he would be a spiritual intelligence ; for a man to exist there must be union between the soul and the body, which preserve each other without confusion ; for the soul does not become matter or the body spirit. They mutually preserve each other, and their union composes the man.

Jesus Christ is truly man. He is Man united to the Divinity. The union of the Divine Nature with the Human Nature does not cause confusion between the Human Nature and the Divine Nature. The Human Nature is perfectly and entirely preserved in Jesus Christ ; without this He would not be Man. The Divine Nature is not confounded with the Human Nature by its union with the Body and Soul of Jesus

Christ ; it is preserved such as it was from all eternity : if it were otherwise, Jesus Christ would not be God. Moreover, as the body and the soul united together without confusion form man, so the union of the Divine Nature and the Human Nature form, without being in any way confounded, one only Person, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity made Man for us.

Such is Jesus Christ, God and Man at the same time ; consequently infinitely just, infinitely holy, infinitely incapable of sin. Such is Jesus Christ, in whom nothing can be displeasing to God, His Father, of whom He is the Splendour and the Glory. Such is Jesus Christ, Justice and Sanctity itself. In Him, consequently, there is nothing which merited the wrath of God, His Father, and yet it is He whom I behold upon the Cross, it is He whom I behold the victim of the severity of the judgments of God. In Him there is but the semblance of our sins, which He was pleased to take upon Him ; and yet what rigours, what chastisements, what vengeance does God exercise upon Him ! All the evils which sin has drawn down upon the world weigh upon Him, torment, and overwhelm Him.

If the Just One and the Saint of Saints is thus treated, what will become of the sinner, criminal and impenitent, the sinner who abandons himself to all his passions, who makes it his pleasure to offend God, who stiffens and arrays himself against Heaven, who arms the Hand of Divine Justice by his iniquities, who obliges It to strike him by his obstinate persistence in evil and his impenitence ? O eternal malediction of God, O ye avenging and devouring flames of hell, will ye not annihilate this sinner ? No ; but

through all eternity ye will hold him alive in your grasp, and will never let him go.

On the morrow I beheld with what terror Jesus on the Cross must inspire the impenitent sinner who abuses the Blood of his Saviour by refusing to be converted.

Jesus Christ, by His death and the merits of His death, has obtained for us the graces which are necessary for working out our salvation. The sacraments and the acts of religion are the fountain from which we can draw these graces. What does the impenitent sinner do? He neglects these graces which are offered to him; he does not profit by them. They are there before him, ready to rescue him from death and bestow upon him life, and he refuses life that he may remain in death. O the folly and blindness of the sinner! What more does he do? He is not content with thus abusing these graces by neglecting them; he abuses them by profaning them; he makes them serve for his ruin and condemnation. O desolation of desolations! O woe of woes! Sin is an effect of human weakness; but is not persistence in sin an effect of Satanic malice? What will the sinner say at the hour when God will demand of him an account of his soul's stewardship? What face will he show then? Where will be his courage? Will he not flee away into the flames of hell, because he will be unable to endure the wrathful eye of God?

Jesus Christ, by His death and by the satisfaction He offered to God for the sins of men, did not intend to free man from rendering any satisfaction. He gave to God the satisfaction which man could not give Him; but, in order that this satisfaction which Jesus Christ offered to God may become profitable to man, man

must do what is imposed upon him, and give to God the satisfaction which He wills to receive from him after the satisfaction of His Son upon the Cross.

Now, the first satisfaction which God demands of man is repentance and the intention of sinning no more. God knows the weakness of man, and is ready to forgive him his faults from the moment he has repentance in his soul. But what does the impenitent sinner do in the face of Jesus on the Cross, in face of the satisfaction which the Saviour gives to God for the salvation of all mankind? He says to God, he says to Jesus: "Thou demandest satisfaction of me for my sins, Thou demandest that I should repent me of my sins and resolve to sin no more: Thou mayst demand this O God, and Thou also, O Christ, mayst demand it, but this demand shall be rejected, repentance shall never be in my heart." O impious word, blasphemous word, word which excites the anger of the Most High, which provokes His malediction and His vengeance! O my God, of myself I cannot do aught else but sin and offend Thee, but I wish not to persist in sin, I wish not to resist Thy grace. I wish to receive from Thy paternal mouth the forgiveness which Thou offerest me. O Saviour Jesus, repairer of the sins of my soul, Thou hast had pity on me, I desire at least not to render Thy pains and sufferings of no avail. If I have offended Thee, from this day I desire to love Thee. I detest my sins; I promise Thee that, with Thy grace, I will fly from them as from the approach of a serpent. I desire to unite myself to Thee, to live by Thee, in Thee, and for Thee.

Ah! better would it have been for the impenitent sinner that Jesus Christ had never come upon the

earth. Better would it have been for him that the Son of God had never hung upon the Cross between Heaven and earth. The crimes of that sinner would not have been so grievous nor so insulting to God. O the fate, the unutterably miserable fate, of that sinner ! O the consternation of his soul before the tribunal of God ! O terror unparalleled ! My God, give me Thy grace, and let me love Thee for ever.

On the third day I beheld in my meditation with what terror Jesus on the Cross inspires impenitent sinners by the intensity of the torments they draw down on themselves from rendering the merits of the Saviour of no avail.

I beheld the consternation of that sinner when he was dying, and I beheld it also in hell. My soul is still filled with terror at the sight.

What moments are those which precede the death of an impenitent sinner ; what anguish in his soul, what terrors in his mind, what remorse in his heart, what intolerable despair ! He sees all the enjoyments, all the pleasures, all the seductions of his life ; nothing of them remains, all have passed away, death is at hand. All his life is spread like a picture before his eyes ; he looks at it and trembles ; he looks at it and despairs ; he looks at it and would wish not to see it. Poor sinner ! if he did but look rather to God and His mercy, God and His fatherly goodness, Jesus and His Cross, Jesus and His Wounds, Jesus and His opened Heart, Jesus and His Blood, the pious souls who are praying for him, who do not despair of the generosity of God, the pious souls who do a holy violence to the Divine Justice—if he would but send up to Heaven a word of repentance, a word of love, a word of supplication—he would be saved. But no ; his eyes are

closed and behold not the mercy of God, or the satisfaction of the Saviour, or the prayers of those who love Him. His eyes are closed, and yet he sees the justice of God and his hand charged with vengeance ; he sees the Cross of Jesus, not as an instrument of salvation, but as an everlasting scourge which shall torment him for ever. He hears voices, not of prayer and supplication in his behalf, but accusing voices calling for his condemnation. His mouth does not implore pardon, it gives vent only to blasphemies and curses. What agitation, what confusion, what frightful pangs throughout his whole being ! Poor sinner, his friends wish to console him, but consolations do not reach his heart. They wish to re-animate faith within him, and faith revives, not to save him, but to consume him like the flame of a vast furnace. Faith enlightens and burns him. The bandage that blinded him has fallen from his eyes ; he sees—but what ? The Eternity which opens before him charged with the torments and the woes invented and created by a God, the avenger of His name and of His glory. He sees between God and himself an infinite distance which he will never be able to traverse, and he sinks under the weight of his iniquities. Oh, what moments, what sufferings !

I beheld other impenitent sinners experience at that hour neither suffering nor remorse. It seemed that God had abandoned them to themselves, and their death was like that of irrational animals. But what an awakening ! Will not the justice of God strike them so much the more terribly as they have expected it less ? I followed these sinners into the place of their punishment. What words could express their condition, their pains, their torments, their sufferings in that place of everlasting woe ? They have a sight of

the perfections and the lovableness of God, or, rather, they understand them without seeing them; they understand that God alone could be their happiness, and that they are separated from Him for ever; and this thought is their first and most excruciating torment.

They see the greatness and enormity of their sins, the graces and the means of salvation which God in His goodness had provided for them, and by which they had not profited; and remorse, the more bitter because it is profitless and incurable, forms their second and intolerable torment.

They see that the woes which overwhelm them will never have an end, that they will endure for ever and with the same intensity. O life of despair, which makes them break forth in frightful cries and howlings, and in blasphemies and curses against Heaven! O my God, what hatred in their souls against Thee! what hatred against themselves! what hatred against those who have drawn them into evil! Does there not issue from the depths of these souls, as it were, a storm of imprecations, maledictions, blasphemies, insults, threatenings, which sweeps through hell and keeps its flames alive for ever? What a sight! what a spectacle! my soul was filled with terror, it could scarcely look upon the raging fire of those abysses and the fury of the demons tormenting the damned in all their senses.

Justice of God, preserve me from these torments. O my soul, of what should I complain? Are not the ills which God sends me an effect of His mercy? No, Lord, I will not murmur at my sufferings here below, that I may not merit more dreadful ones in Eternity. Do with me what Thou pleasest. Let my life be a

daily, a perpetual martyrdom provided I save my soul ! Whatever my sufferings may be, Thy holy religion shall make them sweet to me and easy to endure ; should they last a thousand years on earth, the memory of hell will enable me to bear them as though they were a light burden. Let me suffer, O Jesus Crucified, and let me love Thee for ever ! Let my body and my soul be afflicted with trials the heaviest and most painful, so that my heart remain attached to Thee, never be separated from Thee, and have nothing but love and gratitude for Thee, even in the midst of my greatest tribulations.

This, Monsieur, is what I saw, what I experienced, what I understood, so far as my mind could understand it ; this is what I felt in myself so far as my soul was capable of feeling. I am aware that I cannot have shown you by this letter the light which I beheld ; it is God alone who shows it. I have not been able to exhibit to you in their perfection the instructions I received ; God alone could do so. I have not been able to describe to you the sentiments of my heart during those hours of intimate communication with Jesus ; it is the secret of the King which I cannot disclose. But I have endeavoured to prove to you my good-will, and the desire I have to obey every command which you may please to lay upon me.

I will conclude by telling you, as far as I am able to express myself, how Jesus on the Cross makes known the mercy of God.

The mercy of God was manifested to me in the Admirable Tabernacle by the sight of Jesus on the Cross in three ways.

The mercy of God is manifested in the good things which it bestows upon us, in the ills which it sends

us, and in the bliss which it accords us in Heaven. Now, Jesus on the Cross manifests this threefold aspect of the mercy of God.

The mercy of God is a boundless, infinite ocean, in which are to be found all the goods, all the gifts, and all the graces which are reserved for us. Now, sin at the beginning raised a wall of separation between God and man, and God could no longer show mercy to man or shed down upon him the abundance of His benefits. Man was separated from God by an infinite distance, sin. But Jesus came upon earth, ascended the tree of the Cross, made reparation for the sin of man, and mercy continued His work, by bestowing upon man graces still more abundant.

The mercy of God manifests itself in the ills which it sends us. To chastise is to love ; to chastise is to give the means of expiation ; to chastise is to recall the memory of God ; to chastise is to punish here below in order not to punish in the other life. The ills which God sends us are darts which the justice of God aims at the soul ; but these darts are not deadly, on the contrary they are the cause of life, because they are steeped in the waters of mercy and attract the graces of God. Now, it is from Jesus on the Cross that we receive this effusion of the mercy of God ; it is He who implores pardon of God for our sins, and causes the ills of life to be sent us in order to preserve us from those of Eternity. These ills are a participation in His pains, and, united to them, they sanctify us and expiate our sins.

In fine, the mercy of God manifests itself by bestowing on us the bliss of Heaven. It is still Jesus on the Cross who thus manifests the mercy of God ; for it is by His Cross that He closed the gates of hell and opened

those of Heaven. It is by His Cross that He delivered us from the slavery of Satan and made us children of God.

O Cross of Jesus, mystery in time ! O Cross of Jesus, mystery in eternity ! O Jesus on the Cross, Thou ravishest our hearts on earth ! O Jesus on the Cross, Thou captivatest our minds on earth ! O Jesus on the Cross, Thou attractest all eyes to Thee ! O Jesus on the Cross, life of our life ! O Jesus on the Cross, death of our death ! O Jesus on the Cross, happiness and bliss of the soul on earth ! O Jesus on the Cross, hope of the happiness and bliss of Heaven !

O Cross of Jesus, light of Heaven ! O Cross of Jesus, repose of souls in Heaven ! O Cross of Jesus, eternal bond between souls and God in Heaven ! O Cross of Jesus, glory be to thee for ever !

O Jesus on the Cross, let my soul be consumed in loving Thee ! O Cross of Jesus, may I bear thee on my shoulders, not for a moment, like the Cyrenian, but for my whole life, for all my days ; and let me, with thee, present myself to God to ask mercy of Him for all eternity !

I pray you, Monsieur, to excuse my very long letter and the way in which I have written it. You will not taste in it what I tasted in the Admirable Tabernacle ; you will not see in it the lights which I there beheld ; you will not receive in it the illuminations which were given to me. I give what I am able to give out of obedience and most willingly.

Accept, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my sentiments of veneration, respect, and obedience, with which I am,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 14th August, 1843.

LETTER XV.

The sufferings of the Body and Soul of Jesus in the Passion.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I am about further to submit to you what I experienced one day in the Admirable Tabernacle at the sight of Jesus on the Cross.

I beheld in the Saviour two kinds of sufferings: the sufferings of the Body and the sufferings of the Soul, and the sight showed me with what patience and submission I ought to accept all the pains I might myself experience in my body and soul.

The Body of Jesus appeared to me to be afflicted with all the evils, all the sharpest pains, that it were possible to imagine. He endured not only all the sufferings of men because of their sins, but also infinitely more than all the children of Adam together. His Body was like an ocean of suffering; His flesh was mangled by the scourging; His nerves contracted and dislocated by the crucifying; but nothing seemed to me comparable to the thirst which devoured Him. My heart was broken at beholding Him in this condition, I could not take my eyes off Him, and I suffered a thousand deaths in seeing Him suffer. I would fain have unfastened Him from the Cross that I might die in His stead, and suffer what He was suffering; for I could not disguise it from myself—Jesus is innocent, and I am only a miserable sinner; it is for me that He is on the Cross; it is I who have fastened Him to the Cross. O sin of my soul, what hast thou done?

At this moment the light around the Crucifix in the Admirable Tabernacle became more brilliant than

ever. The Body of Jesus appeared to me to be like an immense, illimitable ocean, whence flowed forth into all times, past, present, and to come, upon the trials, evils, pains, and afflictions which men endure, a new fecundity, a Divine virtue, changing these tribulations into eternal joy, these evils into everlasting good, these trials into a never-ending rest. At the same time His Body seemed to me to be like a boundless ocean into which all the woes of humanity rushed to overwhelm Him alone, sufferings greater far than would have sufficed to crush the whole human race and prevent it from ever arising again ; but He was God, and His Divine strength could contain all these evils in the Body and Soul which He had assumed. Then I heard the voice of Jesus, or, rather, I understood, without His speaking, what I may render pretty nearly in these words, which are the expression of what I understood : “ I am the King of sorrows, the Master of suffering, the Dispenser of tribulations. I have won My crown upon the Cross, My dominion by My Death, and My authority by My Resurrection. They who would be crowned with Me must bear My crown of thorns ; they who would reign with Me must die the death which I destine for them each day of their life ; they who would share in My authority will receive it only by the painful way of tribulations. It is I who send to each his trials, who regulate their duration as well as their intensity, and who give to all the example of the glory of Paradise won by conquest. I had no need of suffering for Myself. It is out of love for men that I suffered. All men have sinned ; they ought to suffer in order to expiate their sins, suffer in union with My sufferings, suffer out of gratitude for what I have suffered for them.”

Ah, Monsieur, who can complain when he suffers, if but for a moment he contemplates Jesus on the Cross? Does he not find there consolation, strength, courage, and even the desire of suffering, seeing it makes him resemble Jesus and merits Heaven?

I saw also and I understood, so far as it was possible for me to see and understand it, the sorrow of the Soul of Jesus. The greatest sorrow of a soul is the being forsaken by all whom it loves. If this be so, how would it be possible to represent the sorrow of the Saviour's Soul! I believe that if this sorrow were a material thing, neither the distance between Heaven and earth, nor the profundity or the immensity of the universe would be capable of containing it.

Jesus was forsaken of all, even of His Father. If God had cast on the Soul of the Saviour but one pitying look, It would have been comforted. But no; at that moment the Divinity of Jesus alone found in His Father the everlasting love which He had always had and will always have for It, but the Soul of Jesus found nothing but an exceeding and inflexible rigour in God, who claimed all the rights of His justice. Oh, the abandonment of the Man-God! Jesus alone can comprehend and did comprehend all that there was of suffering in that state of His Humanity abandoned by God His Father.

Jesus was abandoned by all creatures. Some tormented Him, they exercised upon Him all their cruelties, all their scoffings, all their insults; others remained in the most complete indifference.

He beheld, indeed, some standing near Him who shared His sorrows; but their sufferings afflicted Him much more than they consoled Him. Was not their inability to alleviate His sufferings, as well as their

presence which augmented them, more painful to Him than if they had forsaken Him? He saw there Mary, His Mother, who offered His sacrifice to God in union with Him, and whose soul was truly pierced by a sword of sorrow. He saw there the beloved Apostle, the only disciple who remained faithful; and was not this sight enough to cause Him more suffering than all the other torments?

What sorrows did Jesus suffer! and yet what calmness there was in His sorrow! He keeps the profoundest silence; the silence of compassion for His murderers, the silence of submission to His Father. If He breaks it, it is from charity to His Mother and His beloved disciple; if He breaks it, it is from pity for the penitent thief; if He breaks it, it is to fulfil the prophecies; if He breaks it, it is to give back His soul into the hands of His Father; if, in fine, He breaks it, it is to testify that life belongs to Him, and that no one could deprive Him of it. O thou last cry of the Saviour at the moment of His death, cast to the world as a mystery which it will never understand, how thou didst thrill through my soul! Didst thou not say and declare how God shows greater mercy to us, His adopted children, than to Him who is His Son by nature? Didst thou not give me to understand that amidst my sufferings I had always the graces of God as a stay, a support, a consolation, and the word of a friend to give me courage and make me raise my eyes to Heaven—the word of the Saviour? Didst thou not make me feel the necessity of suffering in order to avoid sin, of suffering and submitting to the will of God, of suffering and desiring but one only thing, purity of heart.

Ah, Monsieur, I am sensible what injury I should do the Saviour Jesus by complaining of my sufferings.

He has shown me the necessity, the benefit of suffering, and the way in which I ought to suffer. I shall know better how to do this than to say it if only God assists me in my tribulations with His grace.

I am, Monsieur le Curé, with the deepest respect,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 18th August, 1843.

LETTER XVI.

Of the three communications in the Bosom of God.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I submit to your judgment without reserve what I am now going to write.

It is not words which have been spoken to me, or thoughts which have been inspired, it is brilliant lights, views, illuminations which I have received in prayer. You remember the distinction I drew* between the Admirable Tabernacle, the Bosom of God, and the Heart of God. It is in the Bosom of God that I have received these communications. I am able to reduce them to three points. I do not know whether I shall be able to make myself understood, but I will explain myself as clearly as I can.

The first communication had reference to God, infinitely great and infinitely incomprehensible in His being and in His perfections.

* It would seem as if this letter ought to follow instead of preceding that which is dated 7th September of this same year, since it is in that letter Marie makes the distinction to which she here alludes; unless, indeed, there was a previous letter which has not been preserved.

The second, to relations between God and the soul elevated to Him by the most intimate union.

The third, to the state of a soul stripped of sanctifying grace, its return to God, and its conflicts after conversion.

Finally, I beheld, so far as it is possible to discern it, the infinite disproportion that exists between God and man.

Now, in regard to the first: the simple view and the knowledge of God present something so vast, so perfect, so exalted, so sublime, so immense, so far exceeding all that the mind of man is capable of comprehending, conceiving, or imagining, that all the faculties of his soul are overpassed and his heart is stirred by a variety of sentiments which he would in vain endeavour to compass.

In vain does the mind seek for expressions to render even such things as it conceives and comprehends. However elevated may be the conception or the intelligence which it has of God, it is compelled to acknowledge that it can say nothing more worthy respecting Him than by avowing and proclaiming that He is above all that the mind of man can comprehend or conceive. God is an All which cannot be comprehended. He fills everything by His immensity. Everything comes from Him and returns to Him. God possesses all perfections which flow from Him to creatures in the measure He destines for them. Everything proclaims the perfections of God, everything publishes aloud His glory, everything declares His existence. God is the principle of all good. The source of grace is in God; it is from His Bosom that it is poured into the hearts of men. God is an inexhaustible fund of light, in which are to be

found all science and all knowledge in an infinite degree.

In a word, God is a Being infinitely great, infinitely incomprehensible in His existence and His perfections. He alone can comprehend Himself.

In regard to the second : when God is pleased to elevate a soul, He communicates Himself to it, He makes it participate in His holiness, His wisdom, His might ; He illuminates it with His lights, He fills it with the power of His Spirit, He reveals Himself to it, He transports it and causes it to soar to the very sphere of the Adorable Trinity, and there He pours down upon this soul the fulness of His gifts and graces, causing it to taste a felicity above every felicity.

The soul, seeing itself loaded with the boundless benefits of the Most High, receives them with sentiments of the profoundest gratitude, but, knowing its weakness and its wretchedness, and fearing to make an ill use of the gifts of God, it casts them into the Bosom of the Divinity, to whom it attributes them, proclaiming thereby that it regards God as its beginning and its end, proclaiming, above all, that it believes itself incapable of everything, and abandons itself entirely to God. Thus disengaged and detached from everything, the soul loses itself in the Bosom of God and reposes in Him ; but in this season of Divine benedictions and favours it does not forget what it is, and in its highest exaltation it preserves the sentiment of its baseness and nothingness.

In regard to the third : when the soul is in sin, it finds itself plunged into a deep abyss. There it is encompassed with darkness and is the victim of its enemies, the demons, who hold it captive by the chains

of its passions. This soul, in itself so beautiful and so noble, is through its sin in a state of blackness and of foulness which renders it hideous in the eyes of God, of angels, and of saints. It is separated from God, and estranged from Him by an infinite distance. Nevertheless, God, who is ever merciful, does not wish to abandon this soul notwithstanding its sins. He sends it rays of light and graces that it may know its state and groan over its iniquities. He makes it feel its misery in having lost His friendship. He shows it how good He has been to it, with what mercy and patience He still treats it, and how desirous He is of restoring it to His friendship. He neglects nothing, He employs every means, until He succeeds in winning that soul.

The soul cannot of itself emerge from its abyss, break its chains, and attain to God, but it lifts its eyes towards Him and breathes forth its supplications to Him. God draws near to that soul, He gives it the grace of repentance, which breaks its bonds asunder and enables it to emerge from the abyss. Then He clothes it with the white robe of innocence and purity, by the forgiveness of the sins of which it accuses itself to the minister of the Saviour Jesus.

The soul, however, is still on the borders of the abyss which it has just quitted. There the devil and the passions deal it rude assaults; in order, if possible, to enchain it anew. It encounters a thousand obstacles, a thousand hindrances, which prevent its advancing on the road of virtue; at every step it must enter on a new conflict, and gain a new victory. Happily God is not wanting to it; He upholds it, He sustains its courage, and little by little it flies from the abyss and walks with more facility towards Heaven.

In conclusion : I beheld the disproportion there is between God and man. In God all is infinite ; in man all is limited. God is sufficient to Himself, He has need of no one, He is His own glory, His own felicity ; He is, He has been, He will be from everlasting to everlasting. The world did not exist, man was not created, the angels did not people the Heavens, yet God needed nothing for His eternal happiness, for He was infinitely good, infinitely great, infinitely perfect.

But man did not make himself ; he is the work of God. He had a beginning, he will have an end ; he holds all from God, and however exalted a man may be in grace, in merit, in perfection, he is nothing compared with God. It is impossible to comprehend the difference there is between them. However profound may be the knowledge of man, it is limited, very limited ; the knowledge of God has no limits, it is infinite. Who, then, can sufficiently abase himself before Thee, O my God, who art so holy, so perfect, so powerful, so incomprehensible !

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, the homage of my deepest veneration and respect.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 30th August, 1843.

LETTER XVII.

Of entrance on the way of perfection, and progress therein.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

You have asked me whether the Saviour Jesus ever spoke to me on any occasion of a soul's

entrance on the way of perfection, and its advancement therein. Here are the lights which the Saviour has been pleased to give me on this subject :—

“ When a soul is in the state of grace and desires to enter on the way of perfection and to advance therein, it humbles itself profoundly before God. It acknowledges that of itself it is nothing but sin, that it is impossible for it to do good, and that it has a permanent and continual need of Divine assistance. By these sentiments of humility it draws God near to it. God, in truth, never resists the humble. He inspires that soul with confidence, He gives it courage and firmness, He attracts it to Himself, He breathes into it by degrees the fire of a charity which increases more and more. This charity makes that soul desire God alone, seek God alone, will the possession of God alone, disengage itself from everything that is not God, forget everything in God, in order to occupy itself with God alone. Its eyes become, as it were, closed to the light of day ; it has eyes and sees not, because it desires to look at all things only with the eyes of its soul. The light which it seeks is not that of the sun, but that of grace, which is the light of God enlightening souls.

“ Thus that soul raises itself above the things of earth, above itself, and God pours down upon it so many more graces as He sees it is empty of creatures and of itself. Thus that soul stifles the sentiments of nature, masters its passions, and quenches them, renounces the light of the flesh in order to follow that of the Spirit of God.

“ God, seeing it in these admirable dispositions, communicates Himself to it, and gives it a participation in His own perfections. The more it advances on

the road of perfection, the more does the heavenly light increase within it, the more does it understand that there is but one only evil, sin, because sin estranges from God ; that there is but one only good, God and His love. How marvellous is the action of God upon that soul ! How marvellous the intercourse of God with that soul !

“The soul which knows Him well hates, detests, flies from nothing so much as sin ; it loves, desires, seeks nothing so much as God and the accomplishment of His will. It abandons itself wholly to God, with its troubles, its afflictions, its joys, and its happiness ; it keeps its eyes fixed on God, and walks by the impulse of grace towards perfection, as a boat moves towards the shore by aid of the breeze which carries it onward.

“It may abandon itself to God, that skilful mariner who knows all the perils, all the dangers, all the storms of the sea of this world. He will avoid them, and steer it securely to the haven of salvation. Sometimes He will appear to slumber ; tempests will arise, depths will seem to open, ready to engulf that soul, but it is not the soul itself which conducts that bark, it is not the soul which directs it ; it is God who commands the raging winds and stays them by His word. That soul is in safety, and its security reposes on the confidence which it places in the Saviour.”

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, the homage of my most profound respect, and the assurance of my entire obedience to all your directions.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 10th September, 1843.

LETTER XVIII.

Marie's happiness. Her entire submission to the will of God.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I do not know if what I have said to you in my letters will give you an idea of the happiness which God makes me taste in the Admirable Tabernacle. The lights which enlighten my soul, the graces and the felicity with which it is inebriated in the time of meditation, have something in them so Divine, so blissful, that willingly, were it possible, would I spend my life and eternity there ; for there I possess the object of all my desires, the Saviour Jesus.

Never could I repeat often enough or proclaim loudly enough how lovable the Lord is in His communications with a soul ; how He makes one who loves Him enjoy a supreme felicity even amid the greatest tribulations.

I am most sensible of this, that the more disinterested the soul's attachment is to God, the more unchangeable is the peace which God bestows. The more free a soul is, and the more it is disengaged from everything which is not God, even from the consolations which proceed from God, the more happy and content it is. The more empty the heart is of all that is not God, the more is it filled with the grace and sweetness of God, and nothing could satisfy it if it did not possess God. To be satisfied, the heart must be indifferent to everything and forget all in God. Happy the soul which is established in this indifference, an indifference dictated by the love of God and the contempt of self, and in no wise resembling that in-

difference which springs from love of self and contempt of God. This latter indifference is a black ingratitude unworthy of a Christian heart. It is forgetfulness of all that God has done for it.

But to forget all in God is to acknowledge that everything comes from God, to refer everything to God, to lay up everything in God that nothing may be lost or wasted ; therein consists sovereign and perfect gratitude, the highest homage which it is possible to render to the gifts of God.

I desire to augment in myself this indifference, this submission and abandonment to the will of God. In these sentiments it is that I find the peace, the strength, the confidence, which make me almost insensible to the troubles and tribulations I have to endure. The tribulations have not disappeared, but even in the midst of them I experience consolations which inebriate me with delights.

Yes, Monsieur, I am happy, I desire nothing more ; my happiness is God ; He suffices me, nothing will be able to make me unhappy ; unhappiness would itself increase my happiness, which is God and repose in God.

You see with what complete abandonment I pour my heart into your heart. God, who sees everything, knows well that I hide nothing from you and speak with the simplicity of a child talking to its father of whose goodness it has full experience.

Pray for me, Monsieur le Curé, and be assured of the sentiments of profound veneration, respect, submission, and gratitude with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 5th September, 1843.

LETTER XIX.

Divers communications of God to the soul in prayer.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

You require me to tell you what I experience in my meditations at present. I own that this is very difficult. I will strive, however, to obey you, and will do my best. When I wish to pray [mentally] I do not propose to myself any subject beforehand, I do not make use of any book; nothing of that kind would suit the attraction which I experience on each occasion; and thus, so far from being useful to me, this selection or preparation would prove a burden or an irksome hindrance to me. I place myself, then, in prayer with the sole disposition to receive the attraction which shall be given me. Sometimes I immediately feel myself drawn to seek God; and I seek Him with docility and humility. At other times this attraction delays coming; I then repose in the Bosom of God, humbling and annihilating myself in the presence of His infinite holiness, I a poor creature, a sinner, and prone to evil, God allows Himself to be sought for a longer or a shorter time, and I remain always in a state of submission, even though He should not permit me to find Him. But no; sooner or later, He comes, and says to my soul, "Seek Me," and then I seek Him and find Him. God, in fact, never resists a full and entire submission to His Divine will.

God communicates Himself to the soul and discovers Himself to it in several ways.

God communicates Himself to the soul by His simple presence, and the soul, experiencing the sensible pres-

ence of God, reposes in Him, and follows the attraction which is given it conformably to this communication.

God communicates Himself to the soul by the gifts of His grace. The soul then seems to receive floods of graces which fill the heart and penetrate the whole body as if coursing with the blood. The soul is all inebriated therewith. At that moment its sufferings, whatever they may be, vanish ; the soul is insensible to them, because it experiences an unspeakable happiness in the communication which is made to it.

God communicates Himself to the soul by imparting to it manifold knowledge by means of lights and Divine illuminations, manifestations which in some sort are beatific, or by thoughts with which He inspires it and words which He causes it to hear.

God communicates Himself to the soul by causing it to penetrate into the Bosom of His immensity, and the more deeply it penetrates the greater and the more exalted is this communication.

Again, God communicates Himself to the soul in a manner still more perfect by causing it to penetrate into His very Heart. I do not know, Monsieur, if you understand what I mean. I make a great distinction between the Bosom of God and the Heart of God. The communications which God makes to a soul in His Heart are the most intimate, the most exalted, the most perfect. It is there, in fact, that the soul finds the point of reunion of all the perfections of God ; there it receives into itself the sweetest impressions, and is altogether penetrated by them. There it sees and contemplates the Divine perfections it all their splendour, seized with wonder, admiration and love. The Heart of God is the source whence spring all graces. The Heart of God is the plenitude of all

goods, and the soul which penetrates into this Heart possesses them to such a degree that it seems to hold them in common with God. It is there that He discovers to it the reality of His substance, of which He calls it to a participation in order to make it one with Himself. In fine, it is there that between the soul and God, the creature and the Creator, the finite and the Infinite, the most marvellous, the most admirable, and the sublimest conceivable intercourse takes place. There God speaks a language unintelligible to men ; there the soul speaks to God in a language of which it has no longer the intelligence when it has ceased to speak, and which it will only find again in Heaven, there to possess it for ever. This language is hidden, interior, mysterious ; it is in the form of a song, and yet it is not a song. For this language the sound neither of voice nor of words is needed. The soul instantly understands this language, yet not by a real and reasonable comprehension, but by the sweet and delightful sentiment and impression produced within it.

In this language God and the soul mutually express their sentiments one for the other. God ever touches the heart of the soul, that is to say, that which is most intimate in its intelligence and its will, and, however insensible that heart may be, it cannot help but weep. It is not thus with the heart of the soul, for it does not always succeed in touching the Heart of God.

God speaks as God, that is, as master ; God speaks as a father, that is, as a most tender and most loving friend ; and how can the soul speak except as a subject or a slave speaks, or as a little child speaks ? When God speaks He makes Himself heard ; when He has ceased to speak the soul answers ; but this answer

does not depend on itself, it depends on God, who inspires it by an attraction which the soul must not resist, but which it must follow diligently and with a great humility in order not to expose itself to losing all. Oh the ineffable bliss of the communications of the soul with God in the Heart of God, that is, in His Eternal Word ! Language inarticulate, silent and mysterious converse through the Eternal Union of the Divinity, that is, through the Holy Spirit ! O Monsieur, I believe that this must be Heaven. O God, Trinity and Unity ! O God of my soul, God full of mercy, God full of tenderness, God full of love, God most admirable, God thrice holy, may I love Thee for ever !

These, Monsieur, are the communications in which I seem to have participated ; which I did not seek to forestall—that would have been useless ; which I did not desire, I desire only what God wills ; but which I would not resist from a fear of offending Him. I attached myself to them with fidelity, with a humble indifference, and an entire submission to the will of God.

It seems to me that the Saviour Jesus said to me some time ago : “ My daughter, the more a soul advances in submission and fidelity to God, and in humility, the greater progress does it make in the hierarchy of communications with God. Be faithful to Me, be submissive to My Father, be humble.” Therefore it is that I try to do His will in everything and utterly distrust myself.

The Saviour Jesus told me also that there are two kinds of communications of God to the soul : the first sensible, the second insensible. When God manifests to the soul the gifts and graces which He bestows upon it, it is a sensible communication ; when He

hides them from it, it is an insensible communication. God acts in one way or the other way, but always for the greater good of souls and according to the road in which He desires to lead them. He does not lead all by the same path ; He makes some for a time follow the road of Calvary, and places others on Thabor, if only to place the latter afterwards on Calvary and the former on Thabor. He is infinitely wise, and His wisdom does everything for the greatest good.

I report these words to you which may be added to what you have asked of me ; and I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, to accept the homage of my highest consideration.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 7th September, 1843.

LETTER XX.

Of the Heart of God.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

One day, during my prayer, my soul was transported, not only into the Bosom of God, but even into His Heart. This is how I seem to have understood what I experienced :—

In the substance of God there is an intimate and special part which I call the Heart of God.

The Father, who is the Principle of the Two Other Persons, and the Principle without principle other than Himself, has in Himself and of Himself this intimate and special part which is His Heart.

The Father, in communicating to the Son and to the

Holy Ghost His substance, His perfections, His Divinity, communicates to Them also this intimate and special part which is His Heart.

Thus the Son and the Holy Ghost have in Them, as has the Father, an intimate and special part which I call in the Three Persons the Heart of God.

The Father did not receive His Heart from any other Divine Person, since He is the First Person, that is to say, the Principle of the Two Others.

The Son received His Heart from God the Father in His eternal generation, and the Holy Ghost from the Father and from the Son in His eternal procession from both One and the Other Person.

Now, by the intimate union of these Three Persons, They have but one and the same Heart, as They have but one and the same substance and one and the same Divinity.

It is not necessary for me to tell you, Monsieur, that I understand nothing material and sensible by the Heart of God. God is a spirit, and all in Him is spirit.

I understand, then, by the Heart of God, the most intimate part of Himself, if I may thus speak, for I must needs express myself in some way. I mean by the Heart of God the Principle which produces, the Point without boundary, limit, or measure, wherein are found united the perfections of God. There is the source of grace, the source of all good, the source of all felicity, which from God are poured out upon creatures, according as it pleases Him to communicate them. It is there that are formed from all eternity and are preserved, hidden, secret, and impenetrable, all the judgments of God.

This, Monsieur, is what I seemed to understand

respecting the Heart of God. I was right, therefore, in saying to you that the Heart of God is His Eternal Word. For the Eternal Word is the intimate life of God ; the Eternal Word is the intimate felicity of God ; the Eternal Word is the riches, the glory, the splendour, the virtue, the image of God ; the Eternal Word is the speech, the intelligence, the judgment of God. O Eternal Word, Heart of God the Father ! O Eternal Father, Principle of the Word and of Thy Heart ! O Divine Spirit, Union by Thy Heart of the Heart of the Word and of the Heart of the Father. How is it that those three Hearts are distinct and yet form but one Heart ? * How is it that God the Father is the Principle of the Heart of His Word, and that the Word is the Heart of God the Father ? How is it that the Heart of the Holy Ghost, eternally proceeding from the Heart of the Eternal Father and of His Word, unites Them in a manner so intimate that They all Three form but one Heart, the Heart of God ?

* Marie has first said, speaking of the Divine Persons, " They have but one Heart, as They have but one and the same substance and one and the same Divinity." A few lines subsequently she adds, " I understand by the Heart of God the most intimate part of Himself . . . the Principle which produces, the Point without boundary, limit, and measure, wherein are found united the perfections of God." Here appears a sort of distinction purely virtual, proceeding from this, that the Divine Nature or Essence, considered either in Itself or in Its central point or in Its constitutive attribute, is identified, by virtue of Its communicability, with the Three Persons, who are really distinct from Each Other. But the mutual opposition of the Persons, which is the only reason of Their distinction, being founded only on relation of origin, ceases entirely in Their relation to Their Nature, which They have in common. Hence, the latter embraces and, so to say, blends them in its unchangeable and mysterious unity, according to the very meaning of the term *Trinitas, Trium Unitas* (Trinity, Unity of Three). See note, vol. i. p. 6. *Note of Jesuit Examiners.*

O my soul, seek not to penetrate the primary mystery of eternity. Adore it in fear and trembling. Adore it with the entire love and submission of all thy powers.

Degrees of Eternity incomprehensible, degrees of Heaven incomprehensible, degrees of Divinity incomprehensible, I see you, but I do not understand you. O ye divers mansions of the house of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, how admirable you are !

You see now, Monsieur, as far as I am able to make you see, the difference there is between the several states of a soul which finds itself under the protection of God, a soul which reposes in the Bosom of God, and a soul which lives in the Heart of God.

A sinner may be, and really is, under the protection of God, since He gives him graces in order to his quitting his sin and returning to life. A soul in the state of grace may be, and really is, in the Bosom of God, since grace renders it the friend of God, well-pleasing to God, the child of God. But that a soul may live in the Heart of God there is need of a far higher perfection ; that soul must merit such a life by regulating all its thoughts, all its desires, all its words, all its actions according to God and the love which it owes to God.

I do not experience such communications invariably in my meditations. They are, indeed, very rare. Ah, Monsieur, it is because I am very unworthy of them. What I have experienced is only the effect of the infinite goodness and mercy of the Saviour Jesus towards me.

Whatever may be the communications I receive, they are none the less agreeable to my heart, or less profitable to my soul. It is occupied with but one

engrossing thought, to follow with entire submission the attraction presented to it, recognising that it deserves nothing on the part of God. In following that attraction my soul finds God, and, finding God, it finds grace and happiness. I am attached to nothing ; I desire only the perfect accomplishment of the will of God. All else is indifferent to me, even what interests me most.

Kindly receive this effusion of my soul, and let it assure you, Monsieur le Curé, revered father in our Lord Jesus Christ, of my veneration and of my most submissive and respectful sentiments.

Your very humble and most unworthy servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 20th September, 1843.

LETTER XXI.

The nature, effects, and practice of chastity.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

In obedience and entire submission to your will, I will express to you what I think, not as of myself, but according to the instructions of the Saviour Jesus, on the holy virtue of chastity. In order to give a clear answer to your question, I will consider chastity, first in itself, secondly in its advantages and its effects, and lastly in its practice.

1. Chastity is a Divine virtue : it comes from God, it gives man a resemblance to God, who is the Being sovereignly pure, without any admixture or participation in anything not Divine, it leads him to God and gives him the possession of Him for ever.

Chastity is a sublime virtue, its source is infinitely exalted, since it comes from God ; its efficacy prevents man from sinking to the level of irrational animals ; it elevates him to the very Author of reason, God, King of the world and of the heavens.

Chastity is a powerful virtue : it makes man master of himself, gives him strength to resist his evil propensities and perverse inclinations, to despise and tread under foot all criminal enjoyment, all forbidden pleasure, generously to overcome the attraction to all that is impure and turn his soul away from libertinage and corruption. Chastity is the virtue opposed to the vice of impurity.

Chastity is a necessary virtue : for it is written* that nothing defiled shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ; and without chastity it is impossible not to defile both body and soul.....

Chastity is a virtue which befits all sorts of persons : it befits all ages, man as well as woman, the aged as well as the child, the rich as well as the poor, the ignorant as well as the learned, virgins as well as the married, the most illustrious and most powerful monarch as well as the lowest of his subjects.

Chastity is a virtue which all must possess ; it matters not what may be their state and condition, all must be chaste.

2. Such is the virtue of chastity considered in its nature : here is how it may be regarded in its advantages :—

Chastity is a marvellous, an admirable, an inestimable virtue. It merits our deepest love, our warmest esteem ; it demands our anxious solicitude, and all our

* Apoc. xxi. 27.

endeavours to acquire it, if we are not so happy as to possess it, or to increase it daily more and more by avoiding everything which could injure or soil it.

How profitable to the spiritual interests of man is this virtue of chastity ! Chastity delivers him from a shameful passion which agitates and tyrannises over him unceasingly, which devours and consumes him by that thirst for impure and criminal pleasures and enjoyments which he can neither quench nor satisfy, even by giving it everything it asks of him.

What a difference between two men, one of whom is chaste, and the other not so ! What do you find in the latter ? Trouble, disquiet, suffering, and misery. And what in the former ? Calmness, peace, tranquillity, happiness. The one has his mind always occupied with shameful images and ideas, which weigh upon his soul and prevent it from raising itself towards God, which incline and bow it down miserably to the earth, degrade it, and plunge it into corruption and wretchedness, deprive it of the love of God and of the taste for piety, by making it like the irrational animals. The life this man has led often becomes the cause of despair to him at the hour of death, and he sinks into the depths of everlasting malediction.

He who is chaste, on the contrary, keeps his mind free from all shameful thoughts ; he shakes off and puts away from him everything that could trouble or harass his soul, even to the slightest immodest thought, the moment he is aware of it. He raises himself towards God in proportion as he disengages himself from creatures. He keeps his heart pure, and God regards him with complacency. He bestows upon him His benedictions, pours down upon him His graces in abundance, imparts to him His most loving

consolations ; or if He tries him in order to add to his crown in Heaven, He does not torture his heart with the sharp sting of remorse. Then, when the hour of death comes, what happiness and what peace in his countenance ! His soul will fly with confidence to God, to go and receive the crown of glory and immortality which it will have merited by its conflicts, its struggles, and its triumphs of each day.

The spiritual advantages of chastity, then, are the happiness and peace of the soul during life, tranquillity at the hour of death, the glory and felicity of Heaven when life is over.

The temporal advantages are not less considerable. Chastity surrounds him who possesses it with respect and honour ; for it is esteemed of angels and of men, of good people, and even of libertines themselves. He, on the contrary, who is wanting in chastity is despised by all and looked upon as a vile dunghill, which is not indeed trampled under foot because men loathe it and avoid it to escape its defilement.

Chastity secures the happiness of the family. It draws closer and sanctifies the sacred bonds of marriage by a mutual fidelity between husband and wife, and makes them fulfil the obligations of their state.

Chastity forms the glory and honour of the youth of both sexes, and is the consolation of parents in their children.

Chastity extends its benefits even to temporal possessions.

Chastity brings to the family peace and concord, promotes economy, and makes it prosperous, because they who love chastity always love labour. For if it is possible for a man to love labour without being chaste, he must necessarily love labour when he practises

chastity ; and this labour, on these conditions, is always rendered fruitful by God, who is ever rich in blessings to the chaste.

On the contrary, they who do not practise chastity very often fall from an exalted and brilliant position, or, at least, from one of ease and competency, into a state bordering on destitution—sometimes into absolute ruin. The vice opposed to chastity brings with it forgetfulness of a man's duties in his state of life, makes labour unendurable, economy and order impossible, and then all goes rapidly to destruction.

God does not pour down His benedictions on families where chastity does not reign ; so far from it, He strikes them with the scourge of His justice in a remarkable manner. He strikes kingdoms and cities, monarchs and subjects, fathers and children. What examples has not God given in past times, to nations, to kings, and to individuals ! Was it not He who destroyed Sodom and Gomorrha by fire from Heaven, and struck David, and Solomon, and a thousand others on account of the vice opposed to the virtue of chastity ?

3. It is not sufficient to admire the beauty and the excellence of chastity, and acknowledge its advantages ; it is necessary also to practise it. But, alas ! it is but too true that the greater part admire, love, and respect it in others : very few possess it and practise it as it ought to be possessed and practised.

This virtue is of an exceeding delicacy ; a little thing soils it ; it is only by continual watchfulness that it can be preserved. A thought, a word, a look, an act in regard to oneself or another, is sufficient to injure it. I do not mean by this that every thought against modesty is a sin ; every one is liable to thoughts of this kind, even the greatest saints. Now, so far from these

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thoughts having been sins in them, they were the source of an incalculable amount of merit through the manner in which they acted in regard to such thoughts.

What does a chaste person do when thoughts contrary to chastity occur to him? Far from entertaining them in his mind and taking pleasure in them, he rejects them immediately he perceives them; he turns his mind and heart towards God, and begs His holy grace that he may not offend Him. He will never allow himself an unbecoming word, a word with a double meaning which might ruin a weak soul, or even a word savouring of levity which might make a hurtful impression on another. Not only does he forbid himself words of this sort, but he cannot even bear to have them uttered in his presence. A chaste person, finding himself in a company where chastity is attacked or wounded, will not only check any approach to a smile upon his lips in order not to encourage its continuance, but will testify by his serious and modest air, or by some word spoken with a noble courage and a holy indignation, that it is displeasing to him. A chaste person will never harbour the least desire against modesty or decency, because he knows that in so doing he would sin and offend God. He stifles such desires in their beginning, dispels them, and puts them to flight as soon as they present themselves. A chaste person never permits himself the slightest look which is contrary to modesty, because a look cast with evil intentions or criminal thoughts is a sin. It is a cruel dart capable of dealing death to the soul. This is why a chaste person watches over his looks, this is why he keeps his eyes modestly cast down, and never lets them rest on objects which might make a fatal impression on him. A chaste person will

never permit himself or permit another anything in regard to himself which is opposed to the virtue of modesty, any freedom or forbidden familiarity ; he will respect his body and make others respect it. He will not content himself with being chaste interiorly, he will know how to exhibit his love for this virtue exteriorly. For it is not with this as with other virtues. It is often good to keep the other virtues hidden in the heart, but the virtue of chastity can never be too openly manifested. In like manner, it would be of little avail to be chaste exteriorly if under this exterior veil there were concealed a vitiated and corrupted heart ; such a chastity would be only a counterfeit and a criminal chastity.

A person truly chaste is so both interiorly and exteriorly. Chastity is in his heart like a precious perfume which exhales a sweet and fragrant odour, delighting all who approach it. Chastity is in his heart like a clear mirror which the sun penetrates with its rays, imparting to it a brilliant and resplendent brightness.

How sweet and pleasing it is to see chastity in practice !

O chastity, virtue of man and woman, virtue of all ages and all conditions ! It is thou who closest the eye and ear of the child to all that might sully its innocence. Thou art the fairest ornament of the young maiden, and givest her that reserve which is so pleasing in her words, her looks, her dress, her thoughts, her whole behaviour, at all times, in all places, under all circumstances. Thou makest her shun with the greatest care everything which might tarnish the purity and innocence of her soul ; thou makest her regard as an insult all familiarity which any one, no matter who he may be, would permit himself towards her, embold-

ening her bitterly to complain of it and loudly to testify her indignation. Thou art the glory of the young man who, far from being ashamed of the practice of thee, takes thee for the rule of his conduct. Thou makest him respect himself and respect others, because in dishonouring others he would dishonour himself. Thou art the chief virtue of the married, thou givest them happy, tranquil days, thou preventest them from following the impulse of passion like the heathen, and maketh them live like true children of God. Thou art the aureole of glory to the old man who hast taken thee for his companion throughout his life, and who, in spite of the weight of his years and his head turned grey with toil and labour, seems still to distrust himself as he would a fire smouldering under ashes, and preserves everywhere and always, in all his conduct, that perfect restraint which renders him doubly venerable both for his age and for his virtue.

Such, Monsieur le Curé, so far as I have been able to collect and classify them, are the different instructions which I received, which I retained, and now transmit to you in compliance with your wishes.

I have forgotten to say that, since this virtue ought to be practised in all states and conditions of life, it is not incompatible with any state or condition. All may be chaste because they ought to be so. That which is impossible has never been and never will be the object of one of God's commandments.

Receive, Monsieur, I pray you, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, *1st October*, 1843.

LETTER XXII.

Means of preserving chastity.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

It still remains for me to speak to you of the means which our Lord Jesus Christ prescribed for observing and jealously guarding chastity.

This is how He spoke to me : “ My daughter, there are two kinds of chastity, the chastity of the body and the chastity of the mind. He who is not chaste in his body cannot be so in his mind, and it is seldom that one who is not chaste in his mind remains chaste in his body. The body is the instrument by which concupiscence produces acts contrary to purity ; the mind is that which conceives these acts and causes them to be produced externally by the body.

“ Now, there is a difference between the body, which is matter, and the mind, which has nothing material in it. It is necessary, therefore, to give them two kinds of help, or two different means by which the body and the mind may, each for itself, guard chastity. These two means are mortification for the body, prayer for the mind or soul.

“ If you expend care upon your body, if you pamper it with abundance and delicacy, if you grant it all it craves, if you let it take its ease, be assured that you will quickly fall a prey to the demon of impurity. The body, thus treated, becomes soft, effeminate, devoid of strength or vigour ; it is incapable of maintaining a struggle or of offering the least violence to itself, it becomes the slave of incontinence, to which it sacrifices as often as it is solicited.

“ But if you bring it into bondage, if you treat it as

a slave, if you bind it with the bonds of mortification, of watchings and fastings, it will become strong against the demon of impurity. He will even have a horror of it, and wish to have nothing to do with a prey which he will affect to regard as too contemptible ; the real truth being that he will have no access to it. He will find all the avenues by which he might introduce himself carefully guarded, closed, and defended.

“ Watch, then, and mortify your body ; you will thus be strong and powerful against impurity. But it is not sufficient to mortify it in the matter of sleep and food ; it must be mortified in the sight, the hearing, the smell, the touch—in a word, in all that belongs to the body ; the body and all its members must be the special and particular object of your mortification every day and at every moment.

“ In fine, My daughter, observe well every step you take and every movement you make ; never expose yourself to the temptation of impurity by frequenting such places or associating with such persons as might become to you an occasion of falling. If you do this, My daughter, you will be chaste in your body.

“ But this is not sufficient. You are composed of body and soul, and this body and this soul make but one. The body and soul ought to be chaste, both one and the other, and they cannot be so separately if they are not so both together. You must, therefore, join to mortification, which is the bulwark of the body, prayer, which is the safeguard of the soul.

“ You will remember what I said to you on the subject of prayer. Prayer is an elevation of the soul to God, it is a cry sent up to God, it is a petition for aid from God, it is a repose in God, it is a refuge which the soul seeks nigh to God. Prayer is a distrust of

self, it is an act of love of God. Consequently, everything that is of the nature of prayer is to the soul the assurance of chastity, the defence of chastity.

“My daughter, chastity is a gift of God. Man of himself is not chaste. If he has chastity it is because God has given it to him. It is necessary, therefore, to ask chastity of God if a man has it not ; that is, he must pray. It is necessary to commend it to God, to commit it into His hands to preserve it, that is, to pray ; because man is no more able to preserve it than to obtain it of himself.

“Prayer is the sole defence, the sole support, of chastity ; and, if there are several kinds of prayer, recourse may be had to each of them, as for the preservation so also for the increase of chastity.

“The best of prayers, that which is most efficacious, My daughter, is prayer dictated by love, it is a cry of love sent up to Me. Ah ! My daughter, never has a soul tempted to sin against purity said to Me, ‘My Saviour Jesus, I love Thee with my whole heart,’ without My having given it the victory. Never has a soul tempted to sin against purity sought refuge in the Wounds of My Body without My having enabled it to triumph over the temptation. Never has a soul entered into the Wound in My Heart without My Heart having been to him an impregnable defence. Never has a soul fixed its gaze upon My Passion in the hour of temptation without having seen it disappear like a flash of lightning ; or, if the temptation has continued, without its having repelled all its darts to the very last and the very keenest.

“Never has a soul which loves chastity turned its eyes on the Divinity, and contemplated His justice or His mercy, the omnipotence of His love, His holiness,

or His infinite perfection, without having felt its love for that admirable virtue increase within it.

“Never has a soul acknowledged its misery, its baseness, its nothingness, its powerlessness, and said to God at the moment of temptation: ‘My God, save me,’ without its having been delivered by Him.

“In fine, My daughter, never has a soul worthily approached the Sacrament of My Love without its having found that marvellous table which I have prepared for My friends an impregnable fortress against those who persecute it.

“To communicate in My Body and Blood is to pray to Me, and even to address to Me the prayer which is most pleasing to Me; it is to say to Me: ‘O Saviour Jesus, Thou art the Bread of Life, deliver me from death. O Lord, Thou art God Thrice-Holy, deliver me from sin. O Lord Jesus, Thou takest Thy delight among the lilies of purity,* preserve me from every stain. O Lord Jesus, I am nothing but sin, weakness, and impotence, strengthen me, sustain me, sanctify me.’ I do not remain deaf to that prayer, and I permit the soul to draw from My Heart as from an inexhaustible fountain ‘the wine which germinates virgins.’ †

“Such, My daughter, are the assured means by which you will preserve chastity. Be mortified and be vigilant; pray, that is to say, confess your weakness, and full of confidence abandon yourself to God: you will remain chaste, you will remain pure, and in vain will the spirit of darkness lay snares under your feet, never will he catch you in his nets.”

This, Monsieur le Curé, is what I ought to add to

* Comp. Canticle of Canticles ii. 16, vi. 3.

† Zach. ix. 17.

that which I have already written in my papers or in my letters respecting chastity. I commend myself to your fervent prayers, that I may acquire a new means of remaining chaste and far removed from all that might offend God.

Receive, I pray you, the assurance of my respectful sentiments, and all my gratitude for the exceeding charity you show me.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 6th October, 1843.

LETTER XXIII.

Of thoughts contrary to chastity.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

Some days ago I spoke to you of the virtue of chastity; I reported to you my thoughts on this virtue according as the Saviour had instructed me. I will now submit to you a communication which I received from the Saviour respecting thoughts against chastity and the acts opposed to it. He instructed me several times thereon to make me clearly understand and distinguish between what is evil and what is not so. Here is what I am able to add to that which I set down in my papers.

“Lord Jesus,” I said one day to the Saviour, “teach me what I ought to do so as not to offend against the virtue of chastity either in thought or act.” “My daughter,” He replied, “I will do what you ask. First, I lay it down as a principle, that acts opposed to

virginity are not bad in themselves, that the knowledge of what is contrary to virginity and to chastity is not bad in itself any more than thoughts concerning what sullies virginity or chastity are bad in themselves.

“The act contrary to virginity is a sin only when there is an abuse in the doing of it, and in circumstances and in cases in which it is not permissible. But this act, in the marriage state, when the laws fixed by God are observed, becomes a religious act.*

“The knowledge of things opposed to virginity or to chastity is bad only by reason of the bad use which is made of it ; but it is often useful to one who labours for the salvation of souls and the increase of My glory. How would it be possible for any one to give direction and counsel as to doing or abstaining from these acts if he had no knowledge of them ? It would be impossible ; this knowledge, then, is good, considered in itself.

“Thoughts contrary to chastity are bad only when a person lets his mind dwell upon them with complacency and does not endeavour to put such thoughts from him. It is sometimes necessary to think of these things ; for example, when it is a question of instructing a person and pointing out to him where the evil lies. For this, it is necessary to know that which forms the subject of the instruction which is given. Now, in such cases, you will understand neither the knowledge nor the thoughts are evil.

“Thoughts contrary to purity come from four differ-

* “Si enim ad actum matrimonialem virtus inducat, vel justitice, ut debitum reddat, vel religionis, ut proles ad cultum Dei procreetur, est meritorius.” *Summæ, Supplem.* P. iii., Q. xli., A. iv.

ent sources. They come from the devil, who shoots them into hearts like arrows dipped in the poison of impure desire. These thoughts are very distressing and very difficult to overcome. Nevertheless, if a man asks the aid of God, if he puts his trust in Him, he always comes off victorious, for no one is ever tempted above his strength.

“Again, they come from the inferior part of the soul, which is called corrupt nature. There is the focus of concupiscence, the root of all the passions, especially of the passion of impurity. This part of the soul is fruitful in bad thoughts and bad desires. It affects the body, to which it imparts movements in accordance with the inclination to impurity. The body, which in itself is only matter, being thus moved by the influence of the inferior will of the soul, is closely leagued with it in waging a cruel and obstinate war against the superior will. Now, My daughter, all that passes in the inferior part of the soul and in the body, whether it be thoughts or movements, or impure delectations, is not sin if the superior will does not give its consent ; but no sooner does it give its consent, in however small a degree, and take pleasure in these thoughts, movements, and delectations, than there is sin.

“Hence, My daughter, whatever a person may experience, be they the most disorderly movements and the most obscene ideas, so long as the superior will of the soul does not give its consent, there is no sin, because it is consent only which constitutes sin in its reality. All the rest is but the matter of sin, the movement towards the commission of sin ; it is not sin. It is consent which makes sin when the subject-matter is sinful. These impure ideas, these irregular

movements ought not, therefore, to alarm you, or disturb you, or make you lose courage. For this is the warfare in which a man must be engaged during his whole life, and from which he cannot be delivered except by a very special grace of God. It is this warfare, this struggle, which has caused so many saints to exclaim : ‘ Alas ! when shall I be delivered from this body of death ? ’ * This struggle, so far from being a sin, is an occasion of great merit. Consequently, far from being troubled or afflicted, you ought to give no heed to it, but humbly beg God’s assistance and keep yourself ever on your guard. This is the most terrible enemy of the inferior will, because it never leaves it at peace, and often it has scarcely been driven away before it returns with renewed vigour and at the moment when it is least expected.

“ These thoughts come also from the imagination. The imagination, struck and impressed by these impure ideas, is continually presenting them to the will. Now, in order not to sin, not to give consent, it is not necessary to feel horror and distress at what the imagination presents to the will ; it is sufficient to be indifferent and to take no pleasure therein. The horror or the distress you might feel, far from deadening the imagination, would sometimes only impress it all the more. The better way is to keep yourself indifferent, to pay no attention, to close gently the door of your heart, and remain at peace. If it is the devil who excites these ideas in the imagination, this will mortify him.

“ Often, not being able to make a soul lose grace by succeeding in getting it to take pleasure in impure

* Rom. vii. 24.

thoughts, he avails himself of the state of distress or horror which these thoughts inspire in that soul to rob it of its peace ; he disturbs and agitates it, and then takes advantage of its uneasiness to fill it with discouragement. It is thus, especially, that he attacks pious souls. They ought to be aware of this, to recognise therein the artifice of the devil, and, in place of this horror and sensible distress, prefer to entertain contempt and indifference, which suffice.

“ Finally, these thoughts sometimes come from God. When it pleases God to enlighten a soul and show it the truth, that is to say, order and good, He gives it lights and thoughts upon these things, which, so far from causing it trouble and sin, bring it tranquillity and peace.

“ Thus, My daughter, I have come to enlighten you and to teach you where evil is and where it is not. Your mind and your heart were disquieted because they were not in possession of the truth. Now that I have made it clear to you, be calm and tranquil, and keep yourself in peace. Be ever mistress of the superior will of your soul, and despise all else.”

You will form what opinion you think proper of this ; I shall conform myself to your judgment.

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my profound respect and most grateful sentiments.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 8th October, 1843.

LETTER XXIV.

God protects the humble, and punishes the impious.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

Permit me to relate to you what I saw and heard one day after having had the happiness of receiving Holy Communion.

I was raising the eyes of my soul towards Heaven to offer myself to my God in union with Jesus Christ, whom I had just received, when I seemed to see a person in the air, but discovered only the half of his body.

He said, in a loud and determined voice: "The Lord hath looked down on the prayer of humble souls, and hath not despised their petitions. Sion shall be restored, and its restoration shall be written in the annals of history, to transmit the memory thereof even to the latest age, that generations to come may praise the Lord for that He hath looked down from His sanctuary, and hath regarded the earth from the height of Heaven, to hearken to the groanings of the captives, and break asunder the bonds of the children of those who have been put to death. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost."

Here he stopped, and cast his eyes upon me, as though bidding me finish, and I pronounced the concluding words: "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

I then beheld another person, who covered his ears with his hands, and cried: "I hear the sound of trumpets and of cymbals, but what is this noisy music which resounds in my ears?"

The first voice made answer: "It is the din of the

powers of darkness. Men have banded together to rebel against the Lord, and have said : 'Who will punish us ?' But He who has had no beginning, and will never have an end, has beheld them and has heard them ; He will launch against them burning and consuming arrows, and they shall be scattered."

I saw a third person, whose countenance inspired devotion, and on which were reflected the love of God, joy, and thankfulness. He raised his eyes and his hands to Heaven, saying : "I will praise the Lord on instruments of harmony, because He has not suffered those who hope in Him to be given up to ravening wolves, or to the enemies of souls to be ground between their teeth."

I saw a fourth person who cried with a voice full at once of wonder and of artless simplicity : "I beheld a field of ripe wheat ; it was burning, and the reapers were scarcely able to gather a few sheaves to carry into the granaries of the great king ; they said that the loss was very great."

I submit these lines to your judgment ; I did not ask the Saviour Jesus for an explanation of them, but it seems to me that it is sufficiently easy to divine it. I content myself with telling you what I saw and heard as faithfully as I possibly can, and I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, to accept the homage of my most respectful sentiments.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 4th November, 1843.

LETTER XXV.

God will protect and sustain His Church to the end of time.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I heard one day the voice of the Saviour Jesus pronounce these words : " I will remember My covenant with the Church through all ages. The Church is My spouse ; the Cross is our nuptial bed. On the Cross I have begotten My children by the shedding of My Blood ; and it is on the Cross that the womb of the Church has become fruitful of the grace of the Holy Ghost.

" My spouse is beautiful, and I am ever near to sustain her and console her ; she would suffer too keenly from My absence if I withdrew from her. Like her Bridegroom, she is the object of persecution. Satan rises up from beneath the feet of the Church ; he arms her own children against her to lacerate her bosom, and the unnatural children of My spouse listen to the voice of Satan.

" She lifts up her voice and turns towards Me her eyes moist with tears. No : I will not permit her enemies to gain the ascendancy ; they will but have succeeded in casting some imperceptible dust upon her countenance ; she will wash it off with the water of her tears, and her beauty, become more radiant, will ravish even her enemies."

Such were the words pronounced by the Saviour Jesus.

Deign to receive, I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, the homage of my profound respect and entire submission.

Your very humble and obedient servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 10th November, 1843.

LETTER XXVI.

What God effects through France.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

It is ever with the confidence inspired by your charity and by my quality as your child in the Saviour Jesus that I comply with your desire that I should communicate to you all that I experience.

Here is what the Saviour Jesus said to me last Sunday after Holy Communion :—

“My daughter, I am the master of My own word. I say all I will, when I will, and to whom I will, and no one has the right to question Me, saying : ‘Why Lord, dost Thou speak in this wise? Wherefore such communications?’ I know how to make all turn to My glory and the economy of My Providence, as for the whole world, so for each particular soul. To-day I desire to speak to you of your country. I have discoursed to you many times respecting France, but I have not yet told you what she is or how she acts. Listen !

“The chief king, the chief sovereign of France is Myself. I am the master of all peoples, nations, kingdoms, empires, dominions, but I am specially the master of France. I give her prosperity, greatness, power above all other nations, when she is faithful in hearkening to My voice. I exalt her princes above all other princes of the world, when they are faithful in hearkening to My voice. I bless her people more than other peoples of the earth, when they are faithful in hearkening to My voice. I have chosen France to give her to My Church as her daughter of predilection. Scarcely had she bowed her head under My yoke which

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is sweet and light, scarcely had she felt the Blood of My Heart fall upon her heart, to regenerate her, to free her from her barbarism, and communicate to her of My gentleness and My charity, when she became the hope of My Pontiffs, and soon after their defence and their support. They gave her the well-merited title of Eldest Daughter of the Church. Now, you know, whatever is done to My Church I regard as done unto Me. If she is honoured, I am honoured in her ; if she is defended, I am defended in her ; if she is betrayed, I am betrayed in her ; if her blood is shed, it is My Blood which issues from her veins. Well, My daughter, I say it to the honour and the glory of your country, for ages France defended and protected My Church ; she was My instrument, full of life, the visible and indestructible bulwark which I gave to My Church to protect her against her enemies. From the height of Heaven I protected her, herself, her kings, and their subjects. What great men she has produced, that is to say, what saints in all conditions, on the throne as in the humblest cottage ! What great men she has produced, that is to say, what intelligences, the friends of order and of truth ! What great men she has produced, that is to say, what minds all whose acts were founded on justice and truth ! What great men she has produced, that is to say, what souls inflamed with the burning fire of charity ! It was I who gave her these men who will constitute her glory for ever.

“My generosity towards France is not exhausted ; My hands are full of graces and benefits which I should desire to pour down upon her. Why, then, has it been needful, is still needful, and will be needful, that they should wield the rod of justice ? What a spirit of wild licence has replaced in her heart the only true

liberty, come down from Heaven, which consists in submission to the will of God ! What a spirit of dry, cold egotism has replaced in her heart the ardent spirit of charity, come down from Heaven, which is the love of God and of neighbour ! What a spirit of unjust intrigue and lying diplomacy has replaced that nobility of conduct and that rectitude both of speech and of action which once were directed by Truth, come down from Heaven, which is God Himself !

“ I still see, and shall ever see, in the kingdom of France men submissive to My will, men inflamed with charity, men who are friends of truth ; but at the present hour, My daughter, their number is small. France overturns the throne of her kings, banishes, recalls, and again banishes her monarchs ; lets loose upon them the wind of revolutionary tempests, and makes them disappear like passengers in a vessel that is swallowed up in the depths of the ocean. Scarcely does there remain to them in this shipwreck a plank of safety to bring them to the shore. I have raised up kings for her, and she has chosen others at her own pleasure. Has she not seen, does she not see, that I make use of her self-will to punish her, and to force her to raise her eyes towards Me ? Does she not at this day esteem the yoke of her king to be grievous and onerous ? Does she not feel herself humiliated before the nations ? Does she not see division in the minds of her people ? She is not at rest. All is quiet on the surface ; but all is murmuring, threatening, fermenting below, among the people, among those who are just raised above the populace, as also among the great. Injustice stalks about with head erect, and appears to be invested with authority ; it meets with no obstacle, and acts as it lists. Impiety is pre-

paring to raise its proud and haughty head at a time which it believes to be not far distant, and which it desires to hasten on with all its might. But in truth, I say to you, impiety shall be cast down, its projects dissipated, its designs reduced to naught, at the very hour when it will believe that they are accomplished and firmly established for ever.

“O France, France, how ingenious thou art both to irritate and to appease the justice of God ! If thy crimes draw down upon thee the chastisements of Heaven, thy virtue of charity shall cry aloud to Heaven, ‘Mercy, O Lord, pity !’ To thee, O France, it will be given to behold the judgments of My irritated justice, at a time which shall be manifested to thee, and which thou shalt recognise without fear of error ; but thou shalt know also the judgments of My compassion and of My mercy, and thou shalt say : ‘Praise and thanksgiving, love and gratitude, to God for ever, throughout all ages and throughout eternity.’

“Yes, My daughter, at the breath which shall issue from My mouth, men—their thoughts, their projects, their works—shall vanish like smoke before the wind. What has been chosen shall be rejected, and what has been rejected shall be taken again. What has been loved and esteemed shall be hated and despised, and what has been despised and hated shall again be esteemed and loved. Sometimes an old tree has been felled in a forest, and nothing but the stump remains ; but a sprout comes forth in the spring-time, it develops and grows with years, and it becomes at length a magnificent tree, the glory of the forest. Pray for France, My daughter ; pray much, and never cease from praying.”

You will pass what judgment you deem proper,

Monsieur, on this as on the other communications which have been made to me. For myself, I am content, tranquil, and peaceful. It seems to me that the grace of God is preparing and fortifying my soul in such wise that I am ready to receive every kind of trial. If God is for me, and if I am for God, nothing will surprise me, nothing will affright me. With the grace and support of the Saviour Jesus I am disposed to suffer everything generously for the love of Him. His Cross and His poverty are dearer to my heart than all the grandeurs of earth. Willingly could I give up everything to possess God, despise everything to esteem God, love nothing that I may love God only and what He commands me to love.

I pray you to receive the assurance of my most profound veneration and warmest gratitude, and to believe me to be,

Monsieur le Curé,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 20th November, 1843.

LETTER XXVII.

Rules to be followed in respect to all vocations.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

The Saviour Jesus spoke to me one day of vocation, and of the rule which ought to guide a director's conduct when he has to face the question of vocation. His words were clear and simple. I report to you what He said to me ; you will form what opinion you may please.

“My daughter,” said the Saviour, “I wish to speak to you of vocation. God has destined every one who comes into this world for some particular state of life. This destination is called vocation. The life of man resembles a vast engine, the principal wheel of which is vocation. In this engine, if the great wheel goes well, the rest works regularly; if it stops, the rest must cease moving. It is thus in the matter of vocation. If you find yourself in your vocation your salvation will be easy; if you miss your vocation your salvation will not be impossible, but it will be very difficult.

“In the old law, there was in general but one vocation, marriage. The glory of a woman in those times was to have a husband and many children; the glory of a man was to have a fruitful wife and to be the father of a numerous posterity.

“The new law which I have given to the world is incomparably more perfect than the old law. Thus, in this law the glory of a woman is, not to have a husband and children, but to have neither husband nor children. The glory of man is, not to have a fruitful wife and a numerous family, but to have neither wife nor family. O virginity, heretofore unknown and even despised, how exalted hast thou become, and what glory is like to thy glory? yes, the womb that has not conceived or borne children is that which is most pleasing to Me and on which I lavish My benedictions.

“In the new law there are several vocations: vocation to the state of marriage, vocation to the state of virginity, vocation to the religious state, vocation to My priesthood.

“When a person has arrived at the age for making

choice of a state of life, he ought to endeavour to ascertain what is the state to which God calls him ; he ought to ask of God the necessary lights for ascertaining this state, and submit his inclinations to the judgment of his director.

“ In order to give a decision, a director must be gifted with much wisdom, prudence, and discernment, such as may prevent him from being deceived and enable him to form a sound judgment. To this end, it is necessary to proceed almost in a different manner for each individual, according to his age, temperament, inclinations, and education, as also according to time, place, and circumstances.

“ Before a person has reached the age for embracing any state of life, a director ought to take care to engage him to beg of God to make known to him His will. He must not employ the term vocation, which the person in question would probably not understand, and which might be a source of disquiet to him. He ought to bid him repeat often and from the bottom of his heart these words : ‘ My God, make me to know and do Thy holy will.’ God will hearken favourably to such a prayer, and will grant it.

“ A director ought not to try to suggest a vocation ; this would be to usurp the rights of God. A director can simply be the judge of the vocation to which God calls a soul. Now, in order to judge, he ought to examine the sentiments and the inclinations of the person whom he directs, and then pronounce according to the lights of faith and not according to merely human views.

“ All this being premised, you will understand, My daughter, that a director may have to deal with a person who, although he has reached the age for

choosing a state of life, has not yet reflected on the subject, or is hesitating between two different states, or a person who is called to marriage, to virginity, to the religious life, or to a participation in My priesthood.

“What, then, ought a director to do in respect to a person who is of an age to embrace a state of life but has not yet thought of choosing any? He ought to show him, at least if he be capable of understanding these things, how important it is to ascertain his vocation, and, without making special mention of any, engage him to beg God to enlighten him on the subject. He ought to study his tastes and inclinations with a view to assisting him, if it be necessary, in discerning God’s call ; but he ought not to particularise any kind of life before ascertaining, as far as possible, what that is for which he is designed.

“What ought a director to do who sees a person whom he is directing placed, as it were, between two lines of action, undecided, and not knowing which to follow and embrace? In such a case two things are indispensable to a director, very great prudence and an immovable firmness. A director must always be prudent, discreet, and circumspect, but in this case more than ever. You will understand, My daughter, that God does not give two vocations ; He gives but one. If a director causes that person to embrace the kind of life to which God does not call him, to what dangers is not that person exposed ! A director will examine, therefore, with minute care the two different paths presented to the person he is directing ; he will then search into the inclinations, sentiments, and thoughts of him whom it is his duty to enlighten. He will weigh seriously, and in a spirit of faith, the

motives which incline rather to one kind of life than to another ; and when he sees that one of the two does not offer a great hope of salvation, while the other offers a great probability or, at least, a greater assurance, he will enjoin the person he is directing to embrace this latter state and forbid his choosing the former. He will employ all his authority to this end. For if that person may be lost in a state in which there is great hope of his being saved, how will it fare with him in a state which offers no hope or scarcely any ? He must, therefore, also be exceedingly firm. That person, however, like every other, ought to submit himself to the decision of his director. God will bless his submission, will preserve him from all danger, and enable him to gain the harbour of salvation. Of the vocation to the marriage state I have already spoken, and will not speak of it again.

“ What must a director do to whom a person makes known his inclination to virginity ? He ought not immediately to acquiesce in his sentiments, but represent to him that marriage is a sacrament ordained by God, a state in which many have sanctified themselves, and in which he may sanctify himself and find special and particular graces fitted to the needs of his soul ; above all, he will make him observe that there is nothing in marriage opposed to chastity. After this, if the person remains firm, if he perseveres in his sentiments, the director ought not to oppose his desires, but instruct him in the duties of virginity, and make him understand how much more holy his life ought to be, how much more detached from the world and its pleasures, and how much more attached to God and to the good movements of His grace. In proportion as he shall see him fortified in his resolution he will

show him the beauty, the greatness, the sublimity of virginity. He will teach him to esteem this state as the most precious treasure of his soul, the surest means to increase in virtue and draw down upon himself My most abundant benedictions.

“What ought a director to do to whom a person makes known his inclination for the religious life? At first he ought not to fall in with his views; without, however, seeking too much to turn him away from the religious life, he ought to represent to him that he is well able to save his soul in the world, that an incalculable number of the blessed have done so, and that a great multitude of Christians are sanctifying themselves therein at the present time. He ought to represent to him that if there is not as much danger in the religious state as in the world, there are nevertheless more weighty obligations. He ought to make him understand that in the case of a person who would enter religion, there must be a complete detachment from all things, a blind submission and obedience, and show him the thorns as well as the roses of the life he is wishing to embrace, in order that later he may not find himself surprised and even discouraged by the trials or difficulties which he may encounter. He must not be always bringing these difficulties before him, but must do so sufficiently to make him know them. He will next inquire what reflections he has made on this subject; he will urge him to speak simply, sincerely, and without timidity, making him clearly see how much it concerns him not to be deceived in the course he adopts. He will listen, he will weigh and will judge all his words and all his answers.

“The director will examine if it be a true vocation, an ordinary or an extraordinary vocation.

“ If he sees no signs of a vocation, he will dissuade that person from entering the religious life, wherein he would probably lose his soul, because he is not called to that life.

“ If he sees only an ordinary vocation, he will not subject that person to any great trials, he will only satisfy himself as to the sincerity of his sentiments and of the motives which lead him to embrace the state, and will urge him to follow that vocation.

“ If he sees a more than ordinary vocation, he will begin by subjecting the person he is directing to small trials, observing the manner in which he bears them. He will note his disposition, tastes, sentiments, inclinations, and will seek to correct, gently at first, all that is defective in him. Nevertheless, he will condescend to his weakness and, like a mother with her child, give him gradually more substantial nourishment. He will form him by degrees to a habit of obedience, and adapt everything to his strength and energies, in proportion as he grows and strengthens. If he sees in him a great courage, a firmness ready to endure everything, this is a mark that God designs that person for great trials, and the director ought to commence the work of God in him in order that, later, it may be consummated and perfected in the religious life. No one is perfect in a single day, no one is an athlete and a soldier all at once, he must be formed ; and the religious life, much more than the common and ordinary life, is to be a struggle and a conflict, which call for exercise in order to secure the victory.

When the director, in his wisdom and in accordance with the lights of faith, believes that he has sufficiently proved that person, he will permit him to embrace the religious life.

“A director ought never to take upon himself to urge any one whatever to embrace the religious life. How blamable would those be who, with an indiscreet zeal, should wish to induce persons to shut themselves up in a cloister, under the pretext that they will meet with less danger there. If vocation be wanting there will be no more hope of salvation there than elsewhere ; on the contrary, a person who has no vocation for the religious life may lose his soul in that kind of life, while he would save it in the world. That director will have to render to Me an account of those souls which his ignorance or his counsel shall have ruined. Should a person even have a vocation to live in virginity, in order to be raised to a great sanctity, and walk in extraordinary ways, this is not sufficient reason for making him retire from the world and enter religion. I design such souls to be the edification of the world and the support of the weak. This is why I do not call them to the religious life ; this is their vocation.

“But if prudence, sagacity, discretion, and enlightenment are necessary in examining any vocation, truly are they needed in regard to a vocation to the priesthood. You will remember what I said to you of the priesthood, of that office so sublime and so tremendous.* Woe to him who usurps the priesthood, and woe to him who draws back from it ! What a strict account shall he have to render to Me who shall have turned away from the priesthood one whom I had called to be My priest and My minister, and he also who urges to enter the priesthood one whom I was not calling thereto ! With what severity shall

* See Writings, Book v., Section 11.

My justice deal with those who admit to the priesthood such as give no proof of deserving it, and repulse those whose conduct and actions do not show them to be unworthy of it ! O Catholic priesthood, vocation of vocations ! O ye who are charged with the direction of My future priests, study, examine, scrutinise, judge, all their sentiments, all their actions, and then pronounce as I would do Myself ! What misery to you, and what remorse in the future, if by your negligence you call to the priesthood one who has not been chosen, who would be, not the shepherd of My flock, but a ravening wolf, who would work its ruin ! What woe to him ! Would not the yoke of My priesthood crush him beneath its oppressive weight ? What woe to souls to which he would not know how to show the way and teach the truth, and whose life he would be unable to nourish ! What woe to My Church, and, above all, what desolation ! O ye who are charged with My future priests, once more I say, study, examine, scrutinise, and judge all their sentiments, all their inclinations ; follow them step by step, observe everything in them, and then pronounce as I should do Myself !

“ No one, My daughter, merits the priesthood ; he must be called thereto as was Aaron, as were the Apostles, as was I Myself by My Heavenly Father, who reigneth in Heaven. When a man has heard His voice, he must rid himself of every personal sentiment, that he may follow only the impulse and movement of the will of God, labour successfully for the salvation of souls, and continue on earth My work of Redeemer and of Saviour.

“ The religious life requires that it should be embraced with pure and holy sentiments, and in corres-

pondence with the call of God ; not from caprice, vain-glory, a spirit of opposition, interest, or a passing short-lived fervour, which would make a bad religious.

“ Virginité requires that it should be embraced from pure and holy sentiments, and in order to correspond with the call of God, not from motives merely human ; without this it is impossible to persevere in that state.

“ The state of marriage requires that persons should embrace it from pure and holy motives, and in order to follow their vocation, putting far from them thoughts of passion or of interest, which would be the sure causes of discord and often lead to a bad life.

“ My daughter, you ought to understand, and all ought also to understand, how great a thing vocation is, what attention must be paid to it, since on it depends the glory which shall be rendered to God in time and in eternity, or, on the other hand, the rebellion which is raised against Him during the life on earth, to issue in eternal malediction in the pit of hell. Nevertheless, in these days, is there anything which seems less to occupy men’s thoughts than their vocation ? is there anything which is treated with greater levity ? O thoughtless, senseless men, forgetful of all their interests !

“ I have taught you to know your vocation, My daughter ; you shalt be My spouse all your life, and you shall be so in eternity. You will remain a virgin, and I will shelter your virginity in My Sacred Heart. Soon it shall be granted you to find a sensible refuge for it in the Congregation which is so specially consecrated to It, and into which I will give you admission.”

This, Monsieur le Curé, is what the Saviour Jesus

said to me. I conclude this long letter with commending myself to your prayers ; I have more pressing need of them than ever. Have pity on me, pray for your child, and believe that I shall be eternally grateful to you.

I am, Monsieur le Curé, my much-revered father in our Lord Jesus Christ, with sentiments of the deepest respect and gratitude,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 25th November, 1843.

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